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THE BIOGRAPHY OF
H.M. QUEEN MARY

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HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN OF ENGLAND

[*Frontispiece*

THE BIOGRAPHY OF

H.M. QUEEN MARY

BY

CHARLOTTE CAVENDISH

ALBERT E. MARRIOTT
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CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

"THE WOMAN THAT IS QUEEN MARY"

A strong personality often misunderstood—Shyness of girlhood develops into reserve in womanhood—Practical English upbringing—Interest in women's and children's welfare movements—A true and trusted mother—Dignity of the Court—The Queen's suitable style of dress—A real friend—Fine qualities now more generally recognised and appreciated pp. 15–23

CHAPTER TWO

EARLY YEARS

Born May 26th, 1867—Real romance of her mother's marriage—Home at Kensington Palace—Early childhood—First meeting with Queen Victoria—Birth of the Queen's brothers—White Lodge—The Duchess of Teck—Queen's early days . . . . . pp. 27–36

CHAPTER THREE

CHILDHOOD

Early education—Play in Richmond Park—Fond of dogs and dolls—The whistling habit—Strict upbringing—Interest in gardening—Studies and music—Childhood days with future husband—Household duties—Father's disapproval of sport for girls . . . . . pp. 39–47

CHAPTER FOUR

GIRLHOOD

Aunt's influence on Queen's life—Mme. Bricka—Duke and Duchess of Teck's financial difficulties—Removal to Florence—Critical appreciation of pictures—Return to England . . . . . pp. 51–59

CHAPTER FIVE

ADOLESCENCE

Princess May's "coming out"—Austerity of Victorian Court—Princess Maud—Princess May's request for a bicycle refused—Held as example to others—Friendship with Browning—Early training in social duties.
pp. 63–71

CHAPTER SIX

EVENTFUL YEARS OF HAPPINESS AND SORROW

Knowledge of industrial conditions—Select Commission of 1888—Removal from Richmond to Berkeley Square—Betrothal to the Duke of Clarence—Delight of the nation—Wedding preparations—Duke of Clarence's tragic death—Rest and quiet in France . . . pp. 75–83

CHAPTER SEVEN

BETROTHAL TO PRINCE GEORGE

Return to White Lodge—Engagement to the Sailor Prince—Prince George's popularity—The nation's attitude towards Royal marriages—A résumé of conditions governing them to-day—Preparation for the wedding—Marriage in Chapel Royal, July 16th, 1893—Honeymoon at York Cottage.
pp. 87–95

CHAPTER EIGHT

EARLY MARRIED LIFE

Home life at York Cottage—Gradual approach to and preparation for Queenship—Important part played by Sandringham in home life of the Royal family—King Edward as landlord and patron—Duchess of York endears herself to the tenants at Sandringham—First public duties.
pp. 99–107

CHAPTER NINE

FAMILY LIFE AT YORK COTTAGE

Birth of Prince Edward, June 24th, 1894, at White Lodge—Return to York Cottage—Birth of Prince Albert, Princess Mary, and Princes Henry, George, and John—Family life—The Prince of Wales and his porridge—Domestic happenings and nursery episodes . . . pp. 111–120

CHAPTER TEN

THE QUEEN AND THE EMPIRE

First Colonial tour—Death of Queen Victoria—Prince and Princess of Wales in Australia and Canada—Prince Edward's early liking for riding—Effect of tour on the Princess . . . . . pp. 123–131

CHAPTER ELEVEN

AT HOME AND ABROAD

Close friendship with and admiration for Queen Alexandra—Queen's methodical housekeeping and economy—India tour of 1905—Queen's keen perception and memory—A week in Egypt—Visits to Spain and Norway—Charitable activities—Keir Hardie's tributes to the Queen. pp. 135–144

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE CROWNED QUEEN

Coronation, June 22nd, 1911—The ceremony and its grandeur—The regalia—Death of Queen's brother, Prince Francis of Teck—Investiture of Prince Edward . . . . . pp. 147–156

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE QUEEN'S WORK FOR CHARITY

Queen Mary's interest in the people and their welfare—Visits to East End—Welfare of sick and needy, and help for hospitals—Far-flung philanthropy—A splendid nurse—Help for Working Girls' Clubs—Practical aid for deserving causes . . . . . pp. 159–168

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE QUEEN AND THE WAR

Reorganising to war-time conditions—Rationing at Buckingham Palace —Queen Mary's Needlework Guild—Commander-in-Chief of Women's Army Auxiliary Corps—Personal anxieties—The real woman revealed to her people . . . . . pp. 171–179

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

WAR WORK

The hospitals—Stories of visits to the "Tommies"—Munition factories —Founding of Roehampton Hospital—Queen Mary's war-time mailbag— Visit to France in 1917—The Queen's "Message to the Women of the Empire" . . . . . pp. 183–191

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

QUEEN MARY'S HOBBIES

Appreciation of pictures—An expert needlewoman—Keen interest in gardens—The Queen's taste in reading—Unique collection of fans—Shrewd judge of antiques and values—Patron of British lace-making industry. pp. 195–204

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

QUEEN MARY AS MOTHER

Bond of mutual affection between Queen and Princess Mary—A mother's influence on her children—Two love matches—The Duchess of York— Popularity of the Prince of Wales—Queen's interest in her children's travels and duties . . . . . pp. 207–215

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

QUEEN MARY AS WIFE AND HOUSEWIFE

Consulted by the King on matters of importance—Care of His Majesty's health and well-being—Friends and pleasures shared by King and Queen—Nation's sympathy with Queen Mary during His Majesty's illness—The Queen's household management—Labour-saving devices at Buckingham Palace—Thought for and care of servants at the Palace—Interest in arts and crafts—Furnishing for the Prince of Wales . . . pp. 219–228

CHAPTER NINETEEN

QUEEN MARY AS HOSTESS

Thought for guests' comfort—Queen's preference for Windsor as place for Royal entertaining—Rooms and treasures at Windsor—Queen Mary as guest—Family parties at Christmas and preparation of gifts—Christmas Day with the Royal family . . . . . pp. 231–239

CHAPTER TWENTY

QUEEN MARY'S WORK FOR WOMEN

Deep interest in all branches of women's welfare—Ready grasp and application of detail—Discrimination in bestowal of patronage—A Royal visit and its result—Value of the Queen's example—Increasing popularity of Queen Mary as result of her hard work, kindness, and understanding. pp. 243–251

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN OF ENGLAND . . *Frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

H.M. QUEEN MARY, AGED SEVEN 16

QUEEN OF ENGLAND AND EMPRESS OF INDIA . . 32

MOTHER AND ONLY DAUGHTER 44

H.M. QUEEN MARY WITH T.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES, THE DUKE OF YORK, AND PRINCESS MARY . . 64

A FAMILY GROUP TAKEN AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE . 80

THREE OF THE ROYAL CHILDREN 112

THE LATE DUCHESS OF TECK AND QUEEN MARY AT WHITE LODGE, 1891 128

A CHARMING PORTRAIT OF PRINCESS MARY . . 160

KING GEORGE AND QUEEN MARY WITH THE PRINCE OF WALES, DUKE OF YORK, DUKE OF GLOUCESTER, PRINCE GEORGE, PRINCE JOHN, AND PRINCESS MARY, TAKEN AT BALMORAL CASTLE . . 176

H.M. QUEEN MARY WITH THREE OF HER SONS. . 208

HUSBAND AND WIFE 224

CHAPTER ONE

"THE WOMAN THAT IS QUEEN MARY"

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A FAMOUS man once remarked that no great personage was ever understood by the people; if they were understood they ceased to be great. Whatever may be the truth of this statement it is indisputable that the fierce light which beats upon a throne, and the steps leading to it, often does as much to obscure as to reveal the figures upon which it shines.

This, to a certain extent, has happened to Queen Mary. For over forty years she has been before the public, first as a Princess of the Blood Royal, then as the second, and later as the first, lady in the land. There have appeared in the Press innumerable accounts of her philanthropic activities, her domestic qualities, her career as a wife and mother, her duties as Queen Consort; but the woman behind the Queen, the woman who at the present time is, from the point of view of character and mental ability, the most outstanding member of the British Royal family, is still comparatively unknown and often misunderstood.

That Queen Mary is a woman "not easy to know" has been recorded of her by people of widely varying rank and wholly diverse personalities. As a girl

she was extremely shy, a shyness Princess Mary inherited, and it took her many years and much self-discipline to overcome the outward expression of this shyness : it was never, even in the days of her girlhood, allowed to come between her and any public duty that fell to her share, and though she has never wholly outgrown the tendency, it has slowly hardened into a slight reserve that has at times fallen like a chilly curtain between the British people and their Queen, who, in her own way has exerted a greater influence for good than any other woman of her generation.

As Princess May, only daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Teck, the Queen had a typically English upbringing, an upbringing that was certainly a better preparation for filling a throne in an age essentially democratic, than if it had been spent in ceremonial court circles, for the household at White Lodge was a very simple one, ruled over by a mother who struggled, not always effectually, with limited means. In it the young Princess was not infrequently confronted with the domestic problems common to humbler lives, an experience which has been of inestimable value to her in recent years, when she has done invaluable work on various committees devoted to women's welfare.

There is a pleasant tradition common to the lives of all princesses, a tradition describing in much detail their domestic training, their light hand with the pastry, their ability to run a house single-handed, and other fables of a similar nature.

As a matter of plain fact, princesses as well as princes are given the education and training which

H.M. QUEEN MARY, AGED SEVEN

will best fit them for the duties they are likely to be required to perform in after life, and as, in the main, daughters of Royal families will not be required to cook or scrub, practical training in these matters is not usually considered necessary.

Princess May came nearer to tradition than do most princesses. She did not—though reports to the contrary have more than once appeared—do housework, but she did learn to cook, and she did help to make her own dresses, and she most certainly did receive a training in overlooking the management of a household, such as has made her in later years the wonder of the staffs in the Royal palaces, who had not in past régimes been used to a Royal mistress who understood what their duties were, and—far worse—saw that they fulfilled them. If the choice had been set before her, there is little doubt that Queen Mary would have preferred being a mother to a queen. "I am still old-fashioned enough," she remarked on one occasion, "to regard maternity as woman's highest achievement," and as a mother she has certainly spared no effort to help and inspire her children with the wisdom and ideals her own experience has taught her will best serve them in their own particular stations.

She has not been an indulgent mother; far from it. Indeed, there can have been few girls who were brought up with so strict a regard for maternal authority as was Princess Mary, while even her brothers were not unconscious of the hand of iron beneath the glove of velvet. Yet during the days when, as Duchess of York in York Cottage, she was a young mother with her babies growing up around

her, she found her greatest pleasure in personally acting as nurse to her boys and girls, bathing them—even to-day the Prince of Wales can give most amusing accounts of "bath night" at York Cottage—taking them for country rambles—she has always been genuinely fond of the country—helping them with their first lessons, and watching over their growing bodies and developing minds with the same care she displayed at a later date in directing their maturer energies.

Queen Mary has not spent her maternal instinct wholly on her own offspring. It is the duty of every Queen to become the patroness of innumerable charitable associations; if the project be a worthy one she is expected to support it, whether her sympathies be actively engaged or not, but in all matters of maternity welfare Queen Mary's patronage does not have to be sought; she offers it and takes, moreover, a really practical interest in everything connected with the subject, frequently offering valuable suggestions for the furtherance of various schemes for the welfare of mother and child. Recently when it was announced that a fund was being inaugurated for the purpose of research into the problems surrounding deaths in childbirth, the Queen at once announced that she would contribute regularly until the sum required had been subscribed.

A glance down the Royal subscription list will reveal the interest the Queen takes in such matters, but her private list of charities, which the few who see it are pledged to keep secret, reveals the fact that the Queen takes an interest not only in mothers and children, but in the individual mother and child, and

many families have had "mother" restored to them in full health, as the result of an act of understanding kindness from an "unknown" source.

Like many shy people the Queen is very sensitive, a quality which, though it may be in the nature of a minor martyrdom to its possessor, has enabled her to "see the other side" on countless occasions, and thus to surprise and comfort by her ability to enter into the feelings of those with whom she has been brought into contact. It is this ability that has kept her the confidante of her sons and daughter to the present day. She may not always agree with them, frequently she does nothing of the kind, but she understands their varying outlooks and can thus give advice that, even when it is unpalatable, the recipients know to be valuable. Once when Prince George was just in his teens, he had got into a boyish scrape—by no means an unusual happening—and was on his way to "own up" to his mother. "Mother will punish you," Prince Henry assured him cheerfully. "I know," came the answer, "but she'll make me see I deserve it." A tribute of which Queen Mary was justly proud.

Queen Mary has great dignity, and it has never been known to fail; indeed, she regards it as much a necessary adjunct of her position as the crown was to her coronation, and she has little or no patience with women of rank who forget what they owe to their positions. Though not as a rule sarcastic or given to the pointed jibe, she was once heard to express herself with pungent satire on the subject of a certain Royal lady—foreign—whose activities are often more suited to a film star than to the occupant of a throne.

She has her own conception, a high one, of the duties of a Queen Consort, and she has spent many years trying to fulfil it, but she has had no ambition to pose as the power behind the Throne, or to assume an influence in political or diplomatic circles which she does not wield, although in a quiet and unostentatious way she has done her utmost to help the King in his efforts for international peace. Always a great reader, of late years she has made a close study of the literature of other countries, particularly those with which Great Britain is most closely connected, in order that when foreign diplomats come over, she may be able to speak with understanding of their countries and their people. In this, of course, she has been greatly helped by her travels, always a source of real joy to her. Like many people who are not great talkers the Queen is acutely observant, and has a way of looking beneath the surface that is not always appreciated by those whose faults lie hidden! But, as may be imagined, this gift of observation helps the Queen to do a hundred kindnesses that would never be attempted by those whose perceptions were less acute. She was an interested visitor to the Cecil Chesterton Homes for Women, and when she had been shown over the premises she smilingly remarked, "I see you lack two things—an umbrella stand, and an armchair for the Matron's room. I will send you both." To see the need and to supply it—that was typical of the Queen.

From the hour when she first became Queen she has had the highest standards of Court life, just as from her girlhood she has had equally high ideals of her domestic life, and she has enforced those

standards with remarkable success. Their Majesties' Court has been described as dull—it has even been called respectable!—but not the most rabid socialist has ever suggested it was anything but pure. King Edward had a fine sense of his kingly dignity—an aspect his biographers often ignore—but he liked good company, and was occasionally willing to overlook the tarnish on a reputation, providing its owner was amusing; but at the present Court, wit and wealth in a man, or beauty and charm in a woman, are alike powerless to atone for the slightest stain on a reputation.

When first the Queen came to the throne she remarked to a friend: "My daughter will grow up at Court. I want her surroundings to be suitable, and I intend every mother whose girls come to Court, to feel that they are so." She has certainly kept her word.

In these days Queens must conform to pattern: to a certain extent the mould is prepared, and they must, willy-nilly, fit themselves to it, though of all that it means of the desires, perfectly innocent ones, that must be stifled, of the hopes that can never come to fruition, and often of the love that can never know fulfilment, the world has no knowledge and no understanding. Queen Mary has had, of course, to conform to Royal tradition in a hundred ways, but her personality has survived to a remarkable degree. Who, meeting this woman, in even the most casual encounter, could fail to recognise that she is pre-eminently herself? Her quiet sincerity, her gravity, her habit of listening to the words said to her, and trying to get at the thoughts behind the words, these

1313

belong not to the Queen but to the woman, and all the duties of queenship have not altered them. Even in the matter of clothes she has remained herself! Dress may seem comparatively trivial, but clothes are an expression of personality, and to select a fashion, even if becoming and suitable, and to stick to it year in and year out, despite the respectful entreaties of modistes, the examples of others, even of other royalties, the suggestions of relatives—the Prince of Wales has, much to his mother's amusement, often begged her to adopt another style of dressing—show a force of character few women could equal.

Years ago when the styles favoured by the Queen were the height of fashion, she decided that they suited her as nothing had done before, and as probably nothing would do after, and she decided that that should be her mode of dress for the rest of her life, just as her favourite colours would be the colours she would favour wearing, whether they were "being worn" or not. Who, seeing the result, will presume to say she has not shown wisdom? Would low-neck dresses and short skirts have added to her charm or her dignity, have enhanced the woman or become the Queen?

Queen Mary is over sixty, and she is setting her subjects a very perfect example of the art of growing old gracefully and *graciously*. At sixty-three she is even more popular than she was at thirty-three. "The Queen wants knowing," and it is only of late years that her subjects have really come to know her and, knowing her, to appreciate the really fine qualities of heart and mind that lie beneath a somewhat reserved exterior, and to understand her unceasing efforts—

efforts that did not always come easily to a shy and sensitive nature—for their welfare.

All her life the Queen has not made friends easily. In a less exalted circle, with fewer opportunities of coming into contact with every possible variety of temperament, she would probably have been a very lonely woman, but once she makes a friend the friendship is a steadfast and enduring affection; she does not invite confidences, but in time of trouble she is a staunch and loyal supporter of those who have claims upon her.

Those who have any doubt of the real "humanity" of the Queen, may be reminded of the admiration that fine woman the late Mary MacArthur had for her. A keen social worker in the cause of Labour women, an outspoken critic of the social system, a woman who cared so little for court etiquette that she refused to leave the Royal presence backwards—as is, of course, the custom—Mary MacArthur could yet say, "The desire of my life is to reveal to the Labour Party the woman that is Queen Mary."

In these pages I hope to reveal something of the woman that is Queen Mary, a very intelligent, very capable, very forceful, yet very human woman, who perhaps in the past has missed full understanding because she does not possess in any large measure that facile charm which so often covers a nature shallow and self-seeking.

Queen Mary is a proud woman, she is a reserved one, but the love of her people is very dear to her. She has done her utmost to earn it, and it would be a harsh critic indeed who would not admit she has deserved it.

CHAPTER TWO

EARLY YEARS

CHAPTER TWO

EARLY YEARS

Born May 26th, 1867—Real romance of her mother's marriage—Home at Kensington Palace—Early childhood—First meeting with Queen Victoria—Birth of the Queen's brothers—White Lodge—The Duchess of Teck—Queen's early days.

QUEEN MARY was born on the stroke of midnight on May 26th, 1867, and she at once proved herself to be, as her uncle, the Duke of Cambridge, described her in his diary, "A charming, healthy little child with powerful lungs."

Her mother, the Duchess of Teck, was one of the most popular Royal personages England has ever acclaimed. Before her marriage, as Princess Mary of Cambridge, her spontaneous gaiety, her geniality —in an age when Royalty did not undertake to be genial!—her real interest in things and people, combined with a genuine kindness of heart, had created for her a special niche in the hearts of the people, a niche of which she was highly proud, and of which more than once she openly boasted, declaring that, even when she sat with her back to the horses, which was her occasional place in Royal processions, the public recognised and cheered her.

The English being a decidedly sentimental race, Princess Mary of Cambridge's popularity was enhanced when she definitely refused to marry the Emperor of the French, a match urged on her for diplomatic reasons—and one which would have given her a brilliant position—and accepted the suit of

Prince Francis of Teck, the only son of Duke Alexander of Württemberg.

There is, of course, a pleasant tradition, still sedulously maintained by the international press, that every Royal wedding is a love match, that nothing but sentiments of the most passionate affection have brought the young couple together, and this even when it is plain to the most casual observer that boredom is the one emotion they have in common. But in the case of the Tecks this tradition rested on a basis of fact.

As Prince of Wales the late King Edward had met Prince Francis when travelling on the Continent, and had invited him on a visit to England. This invitation was accepted in 1866 and, at a dinner at St. James's Palace, Prince Francis was first presented to Princess Mary Adelaide, to give her her full baptismal names. The Prince was then twenty-nine, and the Princess four years his senior, but then, as throughout the whole of their married life, he was in disposition and in the gravity of his temperament considerably older than his bride.

The acquaintance progressed rapidly, and four weeks after that first meeting Prince Francis went to call upon the Princess and her widowed mother at Cambridge Cottage, where they were then living, took the Princess for a stroll in Kew Gardens, proposed—and was accepted. Three months later they were married at Kew Church, Queen Victoria conveying her august blessing by being present at the ceremony.

After the honeymoon the Royal couple settled down at Kew, but in those days Kew had disadvantages unknown to the modern Londoner, who " goes to

Kew in lilac time" with the knowledge that by 'bus or rail it "isn't far from London." Charming as it might be in summer, a winter of the old-fashioned variety left it snowbound and isolated, and the young Tecks found it so inconvenient that after a few months' trial they moved to Prince's Gate to await the redecoration of certain rooms in Kensington Palace, promised them by Queen Victoria. A quotation from a letter written by the Duchess of Teck at this period is interesting, since it gives us a glimpse of the ménage into which the future Queen of England was born.

"We are now beginning life on our own account," she wrote, "having just completed our small establishment. It is, of course, a great interest and amusement to us both, and you would laugh could you hear me consulting with the steward and lady cook, and giving my orders *bonne maîtresse de maison*. I am thankful to say that the Queen has given us the greater portion of the apartments she and Aunt Kent occupied at Kensington Palace in days of yore. . . .

"I am finishing this letter in Francis' sitting room, while he is amusing himself at the piano. I mention this to give you an idea of our *tête-à-tête* evenings—which are very cosy in the Darby and Joan fashion."

The apartments at Kensington Palace—those on the ground floor—were ready in due course, and the Duchess, who was a woman who could make a home, even in a palace, contrived to impart an appearance of comfort to those barren, not to say barn-like, salons.

The room in which Queen Mary was born had once been the nursery of Queen Victoria, and it was in the

room above that that august personage had been acquainted with the fact of her accession to the throne. Queen Victoria was at Balmoral at the time of the birth of the new princess, and since in the matter of Royal match-making she had a way of looking far ahead, she was very ready to approve the appearance of a female cousin, "but not too near a cousin," to the children of the Prince and Princess of Wales.

Naturally she wired her congratulations, and reading her telegram, the Duchess of Teck, whose sense of humour triumphed on occasions over even the awful majesty of the great Victoria, permitted herself to smile; "You see, my dearest heart," she murmured to the babe in her arms, "Her Majesty has graciously approved of your birth, so now you are quite officially my daughter."

The baby flourished, and at the age of two months was christened privately at Kensington Palace by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who bestowed upon her the names Victoria Mary Augusta Louisa Olga Pauline Claudine Agnes, all names derived from relatives both near and far. But the Duchess had her own ideas of what was suitable to her adored baby girl, and promptly christened her May, and it was as Princess May that she was known by the public until her marriage.

Even as a baby the little Princess evinced evidences of the shyness which despite her earnest efforts she has never been able to conquer, and when she was presented to Queen Victoria for the first time, she celebrated the occasion by bursting into tears, a tribute the Queen took as well as could be expected.

Even with her father—the Duke—she was inclined to lack confidence, though as her mother recorded he was " in his quiet way, devoted to her," and would even make gallant efforts to prepare her for bed, such efforts invariably ending in the infant having to be handed over to the nurse to untie the knots his clumsy masculine fingers had made.

The progress of a baby does not vary in any great degree, whether its surroundings be a cottage or a castle, and little Princess May was no exception to the rule, though at the age of a few months she had an illness which it was feared might prove fatal. Kensington Gardens were not at that time altogether the pleasant pastures and healthy playgrounds they are at the present time. The Round Pond was in a particularly bad state, and it was thought that the little Princess May, whose nursery windows overlooked the water, contracted her illness through its unhealthy odour. Medical skill, her mother's care, and her own good constitution pulled the little Princess through, however, and she went on a visit to her grandmother to convalesce at Kew.

In due course three sons were born to the Duke and Duchess of Teck—Prince Adolphus, Prince Francis, and Prince Alexander—and as her family increased the Duchess of Teck withdrew to a great extent from the social life of which she was so fond, and devoted herself more and more to her home and children. Indeed her diary, in the years when she was at White Lodge, Richmond, contains little besides domestic references, and entry after entry records such details as : " Heard May say her dates," " Had May down to read the Psalms," " Had

tea in the nursery, and played geographical lotto"; and so on day after day. Indeed, the Duchess gave her children constant supervision, looking after their minds and bodies with unremitting zeal.

No biography of Queen Mary would be complete without a character sketch of her mother, who, in her own way, was certainly a personality, and who would surely have been far happier in these more modern times, when Royalty is accorded a freedom undreamed of in "Queen Victoria's spacious days."

More than one biographer has expressed surprise that Queen Mary appears to bear so little resemblance to her mother, who, having spent most of her time with her daughter, might certainly have been expected to impress something of her own personality upon the plastic mind of youth. As a matter of fact, it was Princess May's constant contact with her mother that forced upon her qualities directly opposite to those of the Duchess.

The Duchess herself was so expansive that those in her immediate vicinity were more or less obliged to contract, she was so vivacious a talker that no one else was required to make efforts in that direction, while her lack of method and disregard of time obliged her family to supply these deficiencies and to cultivate habits which were, it seemed, impossible to her.

The Duchess of Teck had great charm—"Dizzy" was one of her greatest admirers—she had wit and vivacity, and a good-natured tolerance for the world as it was; one who knew her says "she left a laugh with everyone she saw," and that gives us a good idea of the Duchess as she really was. While

Alice Hughes

QUEEN OF ENGLAND AND EMPRESS OF INDIA

A photograph of Queen Mary taken shortly after her marriage.

enjoying her Royal popularity, she cared little for Court ceremonial, and would in all probability have been happier and more content had she been of less exalted rank, with more money to spend and less state to maintain.

Like every other Royal family, the Tecks had to live as befitted their rank, but, comparatively speaking, they were poor, and the Duchess, not brought up to economy, was faced with the problem—familiar to so many housewives of lesser rank—of how to make a shilling do the work of half-a-crown. It was a problem she could not always solve.

She had a warm heart, touched alike by the pleadings of the worthy and the worthless; often she was generous before she was just. The beggar by the roadside never held out his hand in vain, the sick, the needy, the widow, and the orphan found in her a benefactor, while to the professional begging letter-writer she was an easy prey. Often she gave away in charity the money that was really wanted for her own expenses.

As may be imagined, the poor in Richmond loved her, and in a hundred poverty-stricken homes she was a welcome guest. As Princess May grew to girlhood, she was occasionally permitted to accompany the Duchess on her visits to her humble friends. One of them, whom I knew, remembered the visits of the Duchess and her little daughter to his cottage. "I remember," he said to me a short time before he died, "how the Duchess used to come round to see my mother shortly after she became a widow. On a sudden there would come a loud knock on the door, and in would come the Duchess

full of cheery sympathy and bringing a haunch of venison with her. 'This will help you to keep up your strength,' she would say. 'My father used to declare there was nothing like it for nourishment,' and with this she would bustle out, leaving us with a haunch of venison twice as big as our cottage oven, so that we could never cook it, but were obliged to sell it to some richer neighbour. But little Princess May was different. She never had much to say, but she always seemed very understanding for her age; she would try to find out what would suit my mother best, and the next time she came there would be the beef tea or the jelly or whatever it was that was most suitable."

The Duchess of Teck has often been accused of extravagance. This is hardly the truth; it was merely that she lacked the means to maintain a suitable position, and did not always realise this. When the defect was brought to her attention—on one occasion rather forcibly by Queen Victoria herself—she would make desperate efforts to mend her ways, and plan all kinds of somewhat futile economies, sometimes going to the length of using half-sheets of notepaper, or ordering that a cheap brand of tea should be served in the nursery, and similar cheese-parings.

But whatever her faults the Duchess was a lovable, genial woman, who throughout the whole of her life never lost her hold on popular affection. How little she conformed to the rigid ceremonial of her time is illustrated by an anecdote which relates how, being very late for a meeting at which she was to take the chair, she appeared on the platform, looked hard at

the disapproving faces of the waiting audience, and then with her famous smile remarked : " I know I am a naughty girl, but please don't make me stand in a corner."

The Duke, her husband, made an admirable foil to his vivacious wife ; a quiet, rather serious man, fond of family life, content with his lot, unvexed by ambition, he played the rôle allotted to him in a manner that blunted criticism and turned aside the shafts of satire.

This then was the ménage in which was reared England's future Queen ; a very simple home life it was at White Lodge, with but little luxury behind the parade considered necessary for the eyes of the world, a more or less constant anxiety about money, a hopeless attempt to keep the expenditure within the income, a knowledge that even the children shared, that Grandma helped with the boys' school bills, while occasional help came from a more august source. Yet withal a devoted and very united family, mostly happy despite the problems that beset them and, in the case of the Duchess at least, always certain that to-morrow would be better than to-day.

The fact that her mother did not understand and was inclined to ridicule her daughter's shyness probably increased it. She herself liked to be stared at ; she took it as a sign that the people approved of her, and Princess May's shrinking from the public gaze seemed to her absurd.

" Of course they stare at you," she said laughingly ; " it's partly what Princesses are here for," a remark her daughter has been unable to assimilate. Who, watching Queen Mary to-day, can doubt that the

staring process is one of the penalties of sovereignty she would much like to evade?

"My mother told me that every citizen has a right to stare at the Royal family," she once remarked to a friend. "I try to remember this when I want to have the hood of the car up, for I should not wish to deprive any one of my people of their rights."

CHAPTER THREE

CHILDHOOD

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CHILDHOOD

Early education—Play in Richmond Park—Fond of dogs and dolls—The whistling habit—Strict upbringing—Interest in gardening—Studies and music—Childhood days with future husband—Household duties—Father's disapproval of sport for girls.

THE childhood of Princess May was very much like the childhood of any other young girl of good family at that period. She was, of course, educated at home, her governess being Mme. Bricka who laid the foundation of an education which the Princess herself enlarged by her habit of wide reading of the more serious kind. She was assisted by various tutors who came to White Lodge to give the Teck children lessons in various subjects.

Though, as we have seen, shy and diffident with strangers, with her brothers the Princess was a normal, spirited child, who enjoyed the usual childish games, generally played in Richmond Park, and like most only girls in a family of brothers, on various occasions she showed signs of becoming a tomboy. One of the gamekeepers in Richmond Park has given an interesting sidelight on Princess May as she was when alone with her childish companions.

" My word, what a bonnie girl she was ; as full of fun as a young kitten. Many's the time she played rounders and hide-and-seek with my little kiddies, who are grown men and women now. She was no end of a romp. She'd fence with a bit of stick broken off from a tree, and whistle a tune as well as her brothers. I'll tell you another secret. She used to

play cricket. She'd first of all watch our boys play, and laugh and shout over the game; and when they'd gone, she'd bring her brothers along and get them to bowl to her.

"She made great pets of two of my dogs—a brown retriever called Venus and another one called Bob, with four white legs. She could make them do anything. I wonder if she remembers them now?"

From her earliest childhood the Princess was fond of dogs, an affection she has passed on to her children, noticeably the Prince of Wales, who, when occasion permits, is always accompanied by a canine companion, and who like his mother can "make them do anything."

The cheery trick of whistling, though severely frowned upon by her elders, was retained by the Princess until long after the days of Richmond Park. As may be imagined, it was not a habit in which she indulged frequently, or when she was likely to be overheard by any but members of her family, but even when she was Princess of Wales she occasionally celebrated any particularly joyful occasion by whistling a cheery little tune, usually in the privacy of her own apartment.

That her shyness did not interfere with the enjoyment of her girlhood is shown by Queen Mary's description of herself at that period as "very happy, very naughty and very uninteresting"; yet the modern miss would think her childish régime anything but inspiriting, for the Duchess of Teck allowed comparatively few "treats," believing as she herself said that "a child has quite enough to do to learn obedience, to attend to her lessons, and to grow,

without too many parties and late hours, which take the freshness of childhood away, and the brightness and beauty from girlhood. There are too many grown-up children at the present day."

Certainly Princess May was not a "grown-up" child. Her fondness for dolls, a fondness that accompanied her into her teens, would be scoffed at by the child of to-day, but the little Princess took a boundless interest in her waxen family, which she named after various members of the Royal family, reserving "Victoria," by some childish freak of fancy, for a small wooden doll with a fixed vermilion smile!

She speedily became expert with her needle, a skill she retains to the present day, and made her dolls various costumes in the height of the then popular fashion. She also helped to make her own clothes, and did a great deal of very beautiful fancy work, specimens of which were at various times shown at the Exhibitions of the Home Arts and Industries at the Albert Hall.

But though in the main inclined to obedience, even as a small child Princess May showed evidences of the firm will which has always characterised her, and on one occasion she resolutely refused to do over again a darn her governess did not consider showed sufficient care. "No," she said firmly, "it is as good as Mama's and that is good enough."

Her punishment was being kept at home from a party, though to a child as shy of strangers as was the Princess, it was, perhaps, not over-severe. The Duchess did not greatly favour parties. One a month was ordinarily her limit, though occasionally she was persuaded to make exceptions to her rule. Her ideas

on this matter may be judged from her reply to an invitation to her children for some childish festivity: "Much as I should like to comply with your kind request, I fear it is impossible for me to send the children to you to-morrow, as they have been out to children's parties two days running this week, and I fear too much dissipation will have a bad effect on their lessons."

Queen Mary still retains a deep interest in gardens—an interest shared equally by her daughter—and in her childhood she was an enthusiast, a piece of the garden at White Lodge being set apart for her practical activities in that direction. She laboured earnestly to grow such flowers as would respond to her amateur efforts, and was proud indeed when she could furnish a blossom suitable for the Duke's buttonhole.

Like most brothers, the young Princes did not always show what the Princess considered suitable respect for their sister's efforts, but she had a good sense of her own dignity, and when Prince Francis laughed at a rather patchy border, she promptly told him there was one thing he should really set himself to cultivate.

"And what is that?" asked the unsuspecting boy.

"Manners," came the cool reply.

The Teck children had masters for, amongst other things, music, dancing, and languages, at all of which Princess May showed herself an excellent pupil. Languages naturally play a considerable part in the education of all Royal children, and they are set to the study of French and German before they have

completely mastered their mother tongue. On certain days French or German only was allowed to be spoken at meal-times, and any want a child could not express in either tongue went unsatisfied, a method which, as may be imagined, did much to spur on the small pupils. At the age of eight Princess May was quite a fair German scholar; indeed, she seemed to master this language more easily than she did French or Italian.

It is not generally known what a really excellent dancer Queen Mary is. She does not, as a rule, dance the modern dances, but her steps are exceedingly neat, and she moves through such dances as she now executes with great grace and precision. As a young girl she was exceptionally proficient, and seemed to lose much of her shyness in the exercise, though of course the dances of those days were considerably more formal than the jazz movements of to-day. The waltz was, and still is, her favourite dance, and this was the very first dance she ever shared with the Sailor Prince who was to become her husband and the Sovereign of Great Britain.

At White Lodge she studied music under Tosti who, once she had mastered her shyness with her new master, found in her an apt and amenable pupil. Her voice was a sweet soprano, not very powerful, a voice more suited for the drawing-room than the concert platform, and after she had reached her teens she was often summoned down to the drawing-room to sing for the Duke and Duchess. The former, who was exceptionally fond of music, possessed a very true ear, and often he would play his daughter's accompaniments, afterwards making comments on her progress.

Besides her three brothers, Princess May's most frequent playmates were the children from Marlborough House—Prince George (Cousin Georgie), the Duke of Clarence (Cousin Eddy), and their sisters. It is highly probable that even at that early date Queen Victoria had in her own mind decided that the little Princess should one day sit on the Throne of England, and intimacy was encouraged between the children from Marlborough House and those from White Lodge. In this matter the young Princess was far more fortunate than many Royal princesses, who are often comparative strangers to the man to whom they are betrothed. She was allowed to grow up in the constant society of the Princes who were most likely to be her suitors, and thus to gain a thorough knowledge of the man she was to marry. Thus when the time of the betrothal arrived she had a far greater chance of happiness than is often the case in Royal marriages.

Princess May got on well with both boys, and the trio became firm friends. According to tradition the Duke of Clarence was destined for the Army and Prince George for the Navy, and they would tell their small cousin of the doughty deeds they were going to accomplish when they were to manhood grown. A life on the ocean wave seemed to hold the greater attraction for the Princess, on account of the sights to be seen, and the strange lands to be visited—she has always been extremely fond of travel—and it was while sitting under a tree in Richmond Park that Cousin Georgie solemnly promised to bring her a parrot, a bird of paradise, and a monkey. In his youthful generosity Prince

MOTHER AND ONLY DAUGHTER
Queen Mary and Princess Mary.

George added the offer of a little black boy, but this was declined on the grounds that he might not be happy in Richmond.

The Duke of Clarence, not to be outdone, offered the head of an enemy, whom of course he would slay in battle, and stared in dismay when his offer was received with horrified tears.

As Princess May grew from childhood to girlhood the Duchess grew to rely more and more upon finding in her quiet, capable daughter many of the qualities she herself lacked, and the young Princess became her mother's secretary, a position that developed her organising powers, and was certainly a valuable training for some of the duties that were to fall later to her share.

Princess May went through the housekeeping books and did her youthful best to bring order out of the chaos in which she often found them; she wrote her mother's letters, reminded her of the engagements she was prone to forget, and made unceasing efforts to give to the Duchess some idea of method, and above all of punctuality.

It was perhaps in some ways a severe training for a young girl, and doubtless did much to add to the Princess's natural gravity and to give to her a seriousness beyond her years; but it had its value, inasmuch as it brought her into contact with the practical side of life, a contact not always experienced by Royal princesses.

A duty Princess May considered most important was the keeping of her mother's engagement book, by no means the easy matter it sounds, for the Duchess accepted any invitation that appealed to her,

regardless of the fact that she might be booked to open a bazaar or take the chair at a public meeting at the same hour, and it fell to Princess May to arrange matters with as much satisfaction to all concerned as was possible under the circumstances.

Like all sensitive persons, the Princess was always anxious not in the least degree to hurt the feelings of anyone, and many and various were the devices she adopted to smooth matters over. On one occasion she was so eloquent on the matter that the Duchess developed a severe headache, retired to her bed, and sent for the Doctor, whose coming could prove to all that she was quite unable to fulfil any one of the four engagements she had made for that afternoon!

One result of this haphazard state of affairs at White Lodge has been Queen Mary's punctuality and her resolution never to miss a function which she has promised to attend. In this matter the Queen holds what must certainly be a Royal record. Save in the case of illness, we could count on the fingers of one hand the occasions upon which her Majesty has failed to fulfil an engagement, or even been late for one, and not even the Prince of Wales himself is so punctilious in this respect. Whether it be opening a new hospital or similar building, laying a foundation stone (that most profoundly boring of all Royal duties), presiding over a committee, or merely gracing a social function, the invitation once accepted is kept, and Queen Mary appears at the time she named, and not, as so often happens with persons of lesser rank, an hour or so later.

All her life the Queen has been of an extremely active temperament, and as a girl life would have been

considerably less pleasant for her had it not been for the society of her brothers and the games she played with them, for the Duke of Teck strongly disapproved of all women's sports, even in the moderate, extremely moderate, degree in which they were practised in his day. Athletics in any way were sternly forbidden to the young Princess, who was so strictly tutored in the ways befitting a Princess, that she was not expected to appear even in the garden without gloves!

The "unladylike" tendencies of sport were so firmly impressed upon her girlish mind that they have more or less influenced her throughout the whole of her life, and although of late years she has come to recognise the enormous physical advantages of athletics for women, she has never been able to bring herself to view with approbation the modern amazons of the hockey field, the tennis court, or the sprinting track. Her own daughter Princess Mary was permitted little freedom in this matter, hunting—in which the Queen has never had any interest—and tennis being the only outdoor pursuits in which she was encouraged.

CHAPTER FOUR

GIRLHOOD

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GIRLHOOD

Aunt's influence on Queen's life—Mme. Bricka—Duke and Duchess of Teck's financial difficulties—Removal to Florence—Critical appreciation of pictures—Return to England.

APART from the members of her home circle, the two people who had most influence on the life of Princess May were her aunt, the Grand Duchess of Mecklenburg-Strelitz—her mother's eldest sister—and Mme. Bricka, her Alsatian governess. She had been taken to see the Grand Duchess when still a baby, and it is an interesting coincidence that Princess Mary's first trip abroad, which she made in 1912, was also a visit to her great aunt.

In many ways the Grand Duchess was an interesting personality, who shared her younger sister's love of life, but added to it a wisdom and an interest in the more serious events of her time that the Duchess did not always evince. She was an excellent conversationalist, and during her frequent visits to Cambridge Cottage would hold Princess May an enthralled listener to her reminiscences of men, women, and international happenings extending over half a century.

She was genuinely attached to England, an attachment her marriage to a German Prince did nothing to lessen, and foreseeing, as she did, the position her niece was destined to occupy, she would talk to her by the hour of England's greatness, the splendour of her past, and what she fondly hoped was the

promise of her future. To the young Princess she was indeed "guide, philosopher, and friend."

Mme. Bricka, Princess May's governess, who directed her studies once she had passed the kindergarten period, was something of a character, and a very sturdy character at that. She was a woman of real culture, and her interests were by no means limited to the school-room, even though that school-room belonged to a Royal house. Indeed, to anyone who really understood "Bricka's" temperament, her inclusion in a Royal household must have seemed a little odd, for her sympathies were by no means conservative, and she occasionally spoke her mind and voiced her opinions on various matters in a way which under a less tolerant employer, or perhaps one who did not realise her inherent worth, would have brought about her dismissal.

But, however radical "Bricka's" political leanings, there was never any doubt of her deep affection for her young pupil, or her eminent suitability for the duty of training her mind and preparing her, educationally, for the position she was to hold. In return Princess May held her in affectionate memory until the time of her death, which took place in 1914.

More than one member of the Royal family disliked Bricka, and on one occasion an august personage took the Duchess to task for engaging a woman whom they suspected of democratic leanings. In her answer the Duchess showed a flash of a wisdom that was not always hers: "It is a great mistake," she said, "to bring up Royal children in the belief that they are beings cast in a special mould, creatures who can do no wrong, and it is a mistake that in

more than one instance has had tragic consequences. It will do May no harm to realise that there are many people in the world who look upon us as no more than human beings, and in some cases, I believe, as even less!"

Although in some respects the girlhood of the Princess was unduly restricted, and even dull, yet as she advanced in her teens she met in the drawing-room of White Lodge a rather more cosmopolitan circle than she would have done at Buckingham Palace, for as her children grew up the Duchess took more part in social life, visited and entertained, not confining her invitations to the élite of the somewhat restricted society of the period, but delighting to welcome in her drawing-room artists, sculptors, poets, writers, and leading lights of the theatrical profession, so that before she was twenty Princess May had met and talked with most of the famous men and women of her day.

She did not talk very much, it is true, for she was infinitely more shy of those who were presented to her than they were of her, but she listened, she observed, and in her quiet way she learned a lot as merely a looker-on.

At sixteen Princess May was a tall, slender, very English-looking girl, apt as the result of shyness to appear too reserved for her age, keenly observant, unusually well read, and with a tendency to look under the surface of things which has remained with her throughout her life. It was at this, youth's most impressionable age, that her home affairs reached a state of chaos it was no longer possible to hide.

The Duchess of Teck had a Micawber-like habit of

hoping for something to turn up, something, that is to say, that would enlarge her finances, or by some miracle—nothing else would have accomplished it—enable her to live comfortably within her income. But nothing did turn up, and forceful representations from various members of the Royal family, of whom Queen Victoria was one, induced her to try what residence abroad would do in the matter of economy.

The first move was the vacation of the apartments at Kensington Palace where all the children were born, and which the Duchess clung to with an affection she does not seem to have had for any of her other homes. It was, as she herself described it, a wrench, and one from which she would undoubtedly have shrunk had it not been for the fact that there was literally not enough money to keep them up.

Even when in the summer of 1883 the family had to vacate the apartments, the Duchess still hoped that they might be able to remain in England, but as the year wore on it was found to be impossible, and Italy was selected as the place of their exile. To the Duchess the prospect had no allure: she loved England, she hated leaving her large circle of friends and all the congenial people she was wont to gather round her in her English home; moreover, she hated the thought of having to retrench, but there was no alternative, and after much consideration she selected Florence as their headquarters.

To Princess May and her brother Prince Alexander —the two other boys were left at school in England— the prospect was entirely different. There was the thrill of a foreign country, the hope of far greater freedom than was possible in England, and that

anticipation of "fresh fields and pastures all anew" that is never without enchantment to the youthful mind. Mme. Bricka, always keen to seize on any advantage for her beloved pupil, finding that she was not to accompany her to Italy, prepared for her a course of reading on Italian history which, undoubtedly, did much to assist the Princess in her understanding and enjoyment of her new surroundings.

After a long series of farewells, the Duke and Duchess with their two children left England in September 1883, and took up their residence at I Cedri at Bagno a Ripoli. Here an Italian governess was engaged for the Princess, and the family settled down to make the best of what the Duchess at least never regarded as anything but a lamentable exile.

For the Princess, Italy developed a side of her to which in England there had been little appeal. She discovered she had a genuine liking for pictures, and the usual round of churches, portrait galleries, and museums, done as a rule from a sense of duty, became for her an absorbing pastime, and one of which she never wearied.

During later years artists and connoisseurs have at various times expressed their surprise at the very real knowledge of art displayed by Queen Mary. Much of that knowledge was gained during those eighteen months at Florence. Always of a serious and active trend of thought, the Princess found in her new hobby full scope for her energies, indeed rather more scope than those who toiled after her through those endless galleries and innumerable churches appreciated. At first the Duchess did her best to keep up with her daughter, whom she delighted to see engrossed in

her new surroundings ; but she frankly hated walking, and soon gave it up in despair and allowed the Princess to go with her governess, or on entering gallery or museum, she would hand her over to a competent guide, and rest placidly in the porch till her return.

Doubtless so much contemplation of some of the finest of the world's artistic treasures inspired Princess May with a desire to use her own brush and pencil. Certainly she did a very great deal of sketching while in Italy, from whence she brought a sketch-book filled with souvenirs of their stay.

It was this sojourn in Florence that nearly forty years later led Queen Mary to advise her daughter to choose Italy for her honeymoon, where in her turn Princess Mary visited many of the beauty spots, and stood entranced before many of the masterpieces, beloved of her mother.

While the Princess made pilgrimages the Duchess made friends. Neither her exile nor her poverty could damp her buoyancy for long, or rob her of her zest of life, and soon the salon at the Italian villa became as gay and crowded as had been the drawing-rooms at White Lodge.

Princess May would have preferred to absent herself from these social gatherings as much as possible, but her mother, watching her grow from girlhood to womanhood, decided that it was time she became a little more used to the functions it would certainly fall to her lot to preside over, and above all to cultivate the small talk in which she was noticeably lacking.

" Portraits are all very well, my child," she said on

one occasion, when Princess May had averred a preference for an art gallery to an "At Home" her mother was giving, "but it is much more important for you to learn to know people before they are transferred to canvas," and thenceforward she made it a rule that her daughter should always be in on Sunday afternoon, the day upon which the Duchess usually received her visitors, and in the salon of the villa the Princess was introduced to as many people as possible.

The vivacity of the southerners, who in their contacts with her were not to the same degree as her English acquaintances hampered by the thought of her rank and the thousand and one points of etiquette arising from it, did much to help Princess May to overcome her dislike of fresh faces and her inability to make conversation. She absorbed fresh points of view, was made aware of other aspects of life than those of the conventional English aristocracy with whom she had hitherto been surrounded, and learned much that was of value to her in later years.

Thus eighteen months passed away pleasantly enough for the Princess, but not so pleasantly for the Duchess who, despite the social distractions she had contrived to find even in Florence, was still pining for England and her home there. It was in great part owing to Princess May that the stay in Italy was not prolonged into years. "The not too near a cousin" was growing up; so were the Duke of Clarence and his brother, and Queen Victoria, who still had most influence in all the Royal match-making, was a firm believer in early marriages. The august lady thought that it was time Princess May returned to England. She was nearly eighteen, and must

"come out" in due course, and then—well then we should see what we should see.

During her stay in Florence the Princess had kept up correspondence with her cousins, for like many people who are not great talkers she could express herself well on paper, and she had sent home some extremely interesting accounts of her travels. Prince George wrote most often, telling his cousin May of his preparations for the Navy and of his ambitions concerning his life aboard ship, while from the Duke of Clarence there came letters describing his studies, and telling her how much they all missed her from the family circle.

Queen Victoria occasionally wrote "improving" missives, expressing her pleasure at the reports of "your artistic studies," and urging the young Princess to lose no opportunity of adding to her education.

At last came the joyful news that the family was to return home. The Duchess was in transports of delight, but to the Princess the tidings brought a certain regret.

She had enjoyed her stay in Florence. In Italy she had found new interests, new outlets for her energies, a freedom from many of the restrictions that had hedged her round in England, and a wider and more spacious beauty than she could hope to find in the purlieus of White Lodge. But even as a girl she had a very deep and abiding love for her country, a love that had nothing whatever to do with the rôle she was to fulfil, and while Italy had charms, great charms of its own, to her there was not and never has been any country in the world to be compared with her

own. It was this love that helped her to say farewell to the beauty, the magic, and the enchantment that is Italy.

The family returned to England in 1885—when the Princess was eighteen—and once more took up their residence at White Lodge, where the Duchess settled down with great content, and the Princess was prepared for her début into society.

Soon after the return to White Lodge the Princess was confirmed by the Bishop of St. Albans, and on March 23rd, 1896, she was present at her first Drawing Room.

As may be imagined, Queen Victoria took very special notice of her young relative, and was, as she later conveyed to the Duchess of Teck, most favourably impressed by "dear May's maidenly modesty and dignity of bearing, qualities so essential in a young girl."

The Princess renewed her acquaintance with the sons and daughters of the Prince and Princess of Wales. "Cousin Eddy," who was three years her senior, and "Cousin Georgie," who was a year younger than his brother, were both away, one at Sandhurst and the other at Osborne, but she spent much time in the company of the Princesses Victoria and Maud, and when the boys came home for their holidays there were pleasant reunions, with walks and talks to replace the games of an earlier day.

CHAPTER FIVE

ADOLESCENCE

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ADOLESCENCE

Princess May's "coming out"—Austerity of Victorian Court—Princess Maud—Princess May's request for a bicycle refused—Held as example to others—Friendship with Browning—Early training in social duties.

PRINCESS MAY "came out" in the year of the Jubilee, which was perhaps fortunate for her, since it was the year in which Queen Victoria made a belated effort to throw off her private grief, and to appear more in public in the rôle of Queen instead of that of heart-broken widow.

For nearly twenty years after the death of the Prince Consort, who had been esteemed more for his private character than for his kingly qualities, she had, against the humbly murmured advice of her ministers, insisted upon maintaining her Court in a spirit of perpetual mourning, often placing her personal sorrow above her duty to her people. The result was that in the world of fashion there was a definite line of cleavage. On one side were the circles of Victoria's Court, circles narrow and exclusive to the last degree; on the other side there were the friends of the Prince and Princess of Wales, who, realising that even for Royalty time did not stand still, were more democratically inclined.

The sombre gloom of the Court, the funereal dullness of the favoured few by whom the Queen preferred to be surrounded, had its easily anticipated effect upon the character of the Prince of Wales. Denied the full responsibilities which should rightly

have been his, required to act in his mother's presence as if a funeral cortège stood ever at the door, treated more or less as a child long after he had reached man's estate, it is small wonder that the future King reacted somewhat violently against the spirit of the Victorian Court, and chose his friends more for amusement than for edification.

Hints, some from sources which even "The Widow o' Windsor"—as Kipling called her—could not well ignore, reached her to the effect that the genial Prince was attaining a popularity that threatened to outweigh her own. The Prime Minister actually went so far as to warn her that if she did not consider her people more, her "Divine Right" to the Throne would not prove as unassailable as she imagined. About the time of her Jubilee she made an effort to throw off some of the panoply of woe, and to take up the public duties she had frankly neglected.

She could not, of course, altogether throw off the habits of years, but she took those measures that were compatible with her character. She reviewed her troops, laid many of the inevitable foundation stones, and entered into the preparations for her Jubilee. Most significant of all, she visited Spithead to inspect her Navy. This seems one of the most ordinary functions of a reigning sovereign, but the last time the Queen had visited Portsmouth had been in the company of Prince Albert, on which occasion she had taken exception to one of the banners used, and had made a resolve not to visit the town again. It was not until 1887 that she broke her vow, and even then she had a special railway line built inside the dockyard, in order that

Speaight

H.M. QUEEN MARY WITH T.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES, THE DUKE OF YORK, AND PRINCESS MARY

she should not have to journey through the town from her train; but she did actually review the Fleet.

The foregoing may appear far removed from Princess May, but it has considerable bearing on her history, for it gives some idea of the atmosphere of the society in which she moved when she was actually "out." If the breach between the Queen and the Duchess of Teck had not been healed, the meetings between the Princess and the family at Marlborough House would certainly have been less frequent, but the passing of the years had seen a sobering of what Victoria had considered the unnecessary exuberance of the Duchess, while the latter's sojourn abroad had helped to straighten out her finances and had given her a fresh start in her English housekeeping. Thus she was once more received into Royal favour.

In her new life Princess May found all the excitement she needed, for her shyness and her natural gravity of temperament did not incline her to gaiety, while the various public functions, at which she was forced to appear with her mother, were something in the nature of an ordeal. Though there could be no doubt that her stay in Italy had made her less nervous of strangers, she was still unversed in small talk, inclined to appear stiff and unapproachable, and possessed of so deep a hatred of "gush" of any kind that many a genuine compliment froze on the lips of those about to utter it.

With Princess Victoria of Wales she had much in common, and she was frequently in her company. Princess Maud was almost her opposite in many things. The "tomboy" of the Royal family—so

much so that she was called " Harry " in the intimacy of the home circle—Princess Maud was allowed or took a liberty of action, and particularly of athletic action, strictly denied to Princess May.

Indeed, Princess May regarded her Royal relative with a mixture of envy and amazement, for was not Princess Maud the first of the Royal Princesses to obtain Queen Victoria's permission to indulge in that most unladylike pastime of bicycling?

From her earliest childhood —the Duchess of Teck had held her when she was being christened—Princess Maud had shown a real love of adventure; she was exceptionally fearless in the hunting field, expert on the ice, and nearly always won the races ridden by the Royal children in the park at Sandringham, where she rode a high-spirited bay mare named Toynbee.

But bicycling! When the Princess importuned her lovely and gracious mother for a cycle, it was felt that here at least the line must be drawn, but Princess Maud took her courage—a quality in which she has never shown herself lacking—and actually approached her Royal grandmother on the matter.

At first Queen Victoria seemed likely to prove adamant. " It is not nice for girls to display their limbs " (no genuine Victorian mentioned legs!) " in the public roads to every passer-by," she told her granddaughter.

" But, grandmamma," answered the Princess, " what does it matter? Everybody knows that I have legs! " And the Queen, permitting a smile, gave her consent, and in due course Princess Maud and Princess Victoria were to be seen cycling

along the roads in the vicinity of Sandringham, clad in the costume considered correct by the cycling society of the day.

But when, somewhat timidly, Princess May suggested following their example, she was at once, and finally, refused. Indeed, her upbringing and sedate demeanour made her something of an example to which mothers directed the attention of their daughters.

A lady who is the same age as the Queen tells me that when she and the Queen entered upon their first season in London, her mother used to attempt to curb her high spirits. There is one remark of her mother's that she says she always remembers. "Really, my dear," said the mother, "I do not know what young girls are coming to nowadays; surely you do not want to dance that dreadfully vulgar dance—the polka? Look at Princess May; she does not dance it, and she is a cousin of the Prince of Wales."

Her mother encouraged Princess May's friendship with Princess Victoria, whose gentle ways and quiet manners made her so easy a companion. The shy cousin had a genuine admiration and affection for Princess Victoria, who talked so simply to the cottagers at Sandringham and the girls of the Technical School there. She was on terms of simple friendliness with them which caused the somewhat tongue-tied Princess May not a little envy. Her interest in the lives of her less fortunate fellow creatures foreshadowed her long career of unobtrusive usefulness.

It was Princess May who helped her cousin to

manufacture a shawl which is unique, since it was made from yarn spun in the Technical School from the clippings of the coat of Princess Victoria's pet dog.

Naturally Princess May had a small circle of young friends exclusive of the young people of Marlborough House, but she seems to have preferred older people, and indeed to have got on with them better, perhaps because they were more capable of understanding her, and expected less in the way of youthful chatter than did her contemporaries.

Then, as now, she made few friends, but the attachments she formed were lasting. Like most sensitive people she was a good judge of character, consequently escaping the disappointments suffered by her more expansive companions, who made friends on sight only to fall out within a few weeks.

She met and talked with most of the celebrities of her time—Gladstone, Browning, Millais, Irving, and the incomparable Ellen Terry—and learned something from them all. Browning possessed the power to draw her out, and she delighted him by her knowledge of his poem *The Faultless Painter*, which, dealing as it does with the life of Andrea del Sarto, had made special appeal to her whilst studying the works of that great artist in Italy.

It was to Browning that she shyly confessed her wish to know more of "everything." The poet gave her characteristic advice. "Read," he said, "read all you can, for though books will never give you the education life itself bestows, they make an excellent preparation, and," he added, "perhaps later on, you may not have so much leisure."

Princess May took the advice to heart. She seems to have reviewed her education and found it wanting, for to the faithful Bricka she made the somewhat surprising remark, "I've discovered that I'm not really educated at all."

Bricka questioned, and was delighted to find in her former pupil a real desire to study on a wider and more comprehensive scale than that on which a Royal education is planned. No one could have been more sympathetic than the woman who loved learning for its own sake, and who made no secret of her contempt for ignorance, particularly in high places. Governess and pupil discussed the defect and its remedy, which was to be a course of reading to which the Princess should contrive to devote at least six hours a day. This reading was to be *work*, not like the reading of the Duchess of Teck, who would pass weeks without opening a book, and who might then suddenly pick one up while her maid was brushing her hair, and having begun it would sit in the chair until the last page was turned and dinner was three hours overdue!

With Mme. Bricka's help, Princess May made out for herself a time-table to which she resolved to adhere, and in spite of her social engagements she never failed to devote six hours of each day to her books. When we remember that this course of study was entirely her own choice, that she was animated solely by the desire to improve her mind and widen her mental outlook, and that she was at the age when youth finds the call of pleasure almost irresistible, it helps us to understand the real force of character behind the Queen's quiet exterior; to understand also why

many who have known her well pronounce her the most intellectual of all English Royalties.

In spite of this six hours of close study, Princess May contrived a fair share of social diversions. Indeed, in her position she could not have evaded them had she wished, and as the time went on and it became more and more plain to the Duchess—and to many others—that her daughter would one day be Queen of England, she insisted on the Princess accompanying her to as many public functions as possible, that she might understand the gentle art of laying a foundation stone, so essential a part of a Royal training; of becoming patron of a hundred different philanthropic societies, each with different aims and ideals, and of taking an intelligent interest in them all; of opening bazaars, and unveiling memorials with appropriate words and expression, and above all of enduring boredom and fatigue, both mental and physical, with unruffled serenity.

Then there was the London season, visits to her friends' country houses—the Grange, Hampshire, belonging to the Lady Ashburton, Rufford Abbey in Nottinghamshire, Welbeck, Clumber House, Holyrood, and, what she liked best of all, annual visits to the Hotel Victoria at St. Moritz. Here she was at home. Each year there was practically the same set of visitors, and with them she overcame her shyness and reserve, until the whole gathering more or less assumed the aspect of a family party.

Sir Charles Wyndham was often there, and his infinite tact and kindliness of heart could sometimes thaw the " ice maiden " into happy-hearted girlhood. Charades were the great after-dinner amusement in

those days—dancing till cock-crow had not then become fashionable—but the whole party contrived to extract any amount of fun out of what is now considered a hopelessly old-fashioned pastime, suitable only for the school-room. In these charades Princess May almost invariably joined, and was given a principal part, which she acted with great success. The only time she really failed in her part was when they were acting the Sleeping Beauty and she was taking the title rôle. Of course it would not have been convenable for her to have been awakened by a kiss from a stage prince, and all the latter would have done would have been to incline his head over hers, so there was really no excuse for the mighty sneeze that Princess May gave at the critical moment, a sneeze that "brought down the house" and gave her an embarrassing minute of apology.

"It was a little fly," she explained, her colour heightening to vivid rose, "and you can't stop a little fly from making you sneeze, can you, Sir Charles?"

CHAPTER SIX

EVENTFUL YEARS OF HAPPINESS AND SORROW

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Knowledge of industrial conditions—Select Commission of 1888—Removal from Richmond to Berkeley Square—Betrothal to the Duke of Clarence—Delight of the nation—Wedding preparations—Duke of Clarence's tragic death—Rest and quiet in France.

IN later years those who have come in contact with Queen Mary in connection with her many charitable activities have often expressed themselves as surprised at her real knowledge of industrial problems and her deep and practical understanding of the lives of the poor. The foundations of this knowledge and understanding were laid long before she came to the Throne, and it was soon after her discovery of her educational limitations that Princess May found also that there were aspects of life to which she was a complete stranger.

This knowledge was brought home to her by the Select Commission appointed to enquire into sweated labour in 1888. Public conscience had been slow to awaken. Rumours, far from vague, were spread concerning the conditions under which certain classes of workers laboured, and the payment they received for their unending labour. Cases were not infrequent —Ruskin made forcible allusion to some of them—in which wretched men and women and even children had died at the sewing machine, the ironing board, the basting table, or even in the factory, in their frantic desire to earn the few coppers that stood between them and starvation. Even the smuggest of smug

Victorians, so ready to be convinced that God was in His Heaven and "all well with the world," began to have an uneasy conviction that "something must be done." In due course the Commission was appointed.

For nine months there was a dreary and most tragic procession of dock labourers, boot makers, chain makers, furriers, tailors, and "dressmakers" of all kinds to the House of Lords, to stammer out their terrible tales of lives spent in toiling for such sums as barely sufficed to keep life in their wretched bodies, and in those of their still more wretched children, to tell the story of "homes" of one squalid den in which were housed anything from five to ten human beings, of an unending dietary of bread and dripping, with a cup of tea for a treat, of squalor and misery, of disease and death, and to reveal a state of affairs such as shocked the country if not into immediate action—the age of miracles being some time past—at least into a decision to make some attempt to mend matters, an attempt which has to a great extent succeeded, and which, it is to be hoped, will be still further crowned with success.

A diligent study of the newspapers was part of Princess May's reading course, and among the other news she learned of the Select Commission. Her imagination was stirred, her heart was touched, and without realising the horrors that would be revealed, she resolved to follow the work of the Commission to the end. But she was not restricted to the bare newspaper reports, harrowing though they were. The Chairman of the Committee, Lord Dunraven, was a near neighbour of hers at Richmond, as well as

an old friend of her mother's, and during the whole time the Commission was at work he went to White Lodge two or three times a week, to obey the Princess's request to tell her details the Press had considered too sordid for the public.

Perhaps the strongest emotion, after pity, the sorry business roused in the Princess, was her impotent rage that she personally could do nothing to abolish the abuses of which she was hearing and reading. She could and did read every detail published in the papers, and in such Parliamentary papers as were available, and she could and did persuade Lord Dunraven to supplement that knowledge with his own, but all the time she was possessed by a longing to take some practical action towards reform.

An old friend of her childhood tells me that in the only way possible she *did* do something herself, and perhaps a dozen workpeople in the East End were grateful for benefits from an unknown source. At about the time of the sitting of the Select Committee she had occasion to visit her bootmaker, to buy a new pair of shoes. When she went to have the last made, she asked the bootmaker what wages he paid his operatives. The man professed his ignorance, telling his Royal customer that that side of the business was under the control of his partner.

"Next time I come," said Princess May, "I hope you will have found out, and will be able to tell me."

As a rule, the Princess would have been far too shy to put such a question, but Lord Dunraven's revelations had roused in her such pitying horror as to swamp the more personal emotion. The next time

she entered the shop she seized the opportunity to repeat her question, and was told that the workpeople received on an average eight shillings a week.

"But I will not buy boots that have been made by such sweated labour," the Princess said indignantly. "I do not mind paying a higher price, but unless those wages are increased I shall go elsewhere, and I shall try to persuade my friends to follow my example."

The wages were increased. The bootmaker had not wished to employ sweated labour: it had been the old story, "Evil is wrought by want of thought. . . ."

Thus the Princess's girlhood slipped by, in serious study, in learning a very great deal about phases of life of which many Royal personages are more than content to be ignorant, in a quiet and not always admiring observation of the world in which she lived, and on the lighter side, in the social pleasures and duties common to her rank and her age.

When Princess May had definitely made her début, the Duchess, who of course chaperoned her daughter to the dances and dinners to which she was now invited, began to find Richmond almost as inconvenient as she had found Kew some twenty years earlier. The day of the automobile had not then dawned, and the Duchess found the long carriage drives to and from her home wearisome in the extreme. So she looked about for a town house, and found a small one in Berkeley Square, whence later she moved to Grosvenor Place. It was from these residences that the Princess enjoyed the delights of the "season."

Shy with her own sex, she was even more so with

young men, and not the boldest gossip or the most well-informed dowager ever murmured over the tea cups of a "romance" connected with Princess May. It was, of course, taken for granted that she would marry. In those days marriage was considered the only possible career for any well-born girl, much less a Princess, but, though the Duchess of Teck had an excellent idea of her daughter's future, she had too much maternal affection, and too little opinion of the "privileges" of Royalty, to have forced her inclination in any direction, merely because a proposed alliance was "so suitable." Thus the Princess was given several years of freedom in which to form an attachment before the actual engagement was hinted at.

All this time the Princess was constantly seeing both the Duke of Clarence and Prince George, but they were cousins, though not first cousins, and it was not until the summer of 1891 that there began to be rumours of a matrimonial alliance, which should set an English Princess upon the Throne of England.

Queen Victoria, the great Royal match-maker—indeed, she reserved to herself the prerogative of choosing husbands and wives for every Prince and Princess of her House—was strongly in favour of the match. She gave the Prince of Wales firmly to understand that he must speak to the Duke of Clarence and set him about finding a wife. He had not far to look.

Queen Alexandra received the news with mingled feelings. She had always shown a preference for Princess May, and would gladly welcome her as a daughter-in-law, but it had long been plain to her

that it was not the Duke of Clarence but Prince George who had fallen in love with his cousin, although that cousin's demeanour had given no hint as to whether she was even aware of his affection.

It was a delicate, but in Royal circles not an uncommon, situation, for Royal affections have frequently to be nipped in the bud, and fortunately nothing in any way definite had occurred. The Prince of Wales had an interview with his sons, an interview in which with parental wisdom, Royal tact, and a sense of national obligation, he put the situation before them. With the Duke of Clarence there was no difficulty, and since there seemed no alternative, Prince George must sigh as a lover, even while he obeyed as a son.

So the Duke of Clarence went a-wooing. He had inherited his mother's beauty as well as her charm of manner and, apart from his position, he was a suitor who might have won any girl's heart. In November 1891, amidst general rejoicing, there was announced the betrothal of the Duke of Clarence, eldest son of the Prince of Wales, and thus heir-presumptive to the Throne of England, with Princess May, the heroine of this history.

At this engagement everyone was delighted. It was the first time since the sailing of the *Mayflower* that an heir to the British Throne had chosen as his bride an English Princess. Previously they had gone abroad for their wives, usually to Germany, for an alliance of Royal families was an integral part of the foreign policy of the country. During Queen Victoria's reign, however, a different spirit had been growing up. Englishmen were more satisfied with

Downey

A FAMILY GROUP TAKEN AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE

On the King's right: Princess Hohenlohe (d. of Duke of Edinburgh), Princess Helene Victoria of Schleswig-Holstein, Grand Duchess Cyril of Russia (d. of Duke of Edinburgh). *On the King's left:* Princess Victoria, the Queen of Norway. *Seated from left:* Princess Andrew of Greece, Crown Princess of Sweden, the Queen of Spain, Lady Patricia Ramsay. *In front:* Infanta Beatrice of Spain.

their nationality, and were quite convinced that their blood was the finest in the world. Consequently they hoped and desired that their future Queen should, if possible, be English by birth as well as by marriage.

Thus when the Duke of Clarence became engaged to Princess May their highest wishes appeared about to be fulfilled. Their future Queen had blue blood, but it was also English blood.

Princess May at once stepped into the full glare of the limelight which is for ever turned on all those who stand on the steps of a throne. As Princess May she had been but one of many Royal princesses; as the future Queen of England she became only a little less important than the Princess of Wales herself, and everywhere she went she was the centre of attraction. To a girl of her temperament it cannot have been any particular gratification to have to undergo a double amount of staring, comment, and criticism, but the Princess did her best to meet the situation, and whenever she appeared in public with her fiancé, never failed to respond graciously to the cheers which greeted her. Into her inmost feelings concerning the betrothal no biographer has the right to pry. She was engaged to a handsome, courtly young man, who would in due course be King of England, and to most people her position must have seemed enviable indeed. As an ex-Princess who preferred being a woman to being a Queen once remarked: "If an ordinary girl only knew the sacrifices which a Royal Princess must make in her private feelings and even in her marriage for the sake of her people, many eyes that are turned to us with envy and

admiration would be filled with pity and commiseration"; and this applies to many Royal alliances.

The preparations for the Royal wedding were going on apace, the date had been fixed, and presents from all parts of the world were pouring in when the nation learned with surprise and alarm that the Duke of Clarence was ill with influenza. He had never been of robust constitution, lacking the customary complement of skins. The disease, which had its beginning in a cold caught attending a funeral, took a serious turn, and within five days he was dead.

The shock to the country was severe, the more so as it came at a moment when the wedding festivities were being planned.

The Duke of Clarence had been highly popular, he had a kingly appearance and kingly attributes, he was within a few weeks of marrying a typical English Princess, and it seemed that fate had struck an unusually hard blow. Newspapers came out with mourning borders, politicians compared the event with the greatest catastrophes of English history, while Queen Victoria was almost stunned with grief, and referred to the loss as "one more sad and tragical than any but one that has befallen me."

The funeral took place at Windsor, where the Duke of Clarence was buried in St. George's Chapel. Princess May attended among the chief mourners, a striking figure in her deep mourning, which served to further enhance the complete pallor of her face, while she retained the composure Royal etiquette forces upon the Royal mourner.

The death of the Duke was naturally a very great shock to his affianced bride, and after the funeral she

retired with her mother to White Lodge for the privacy she needed. But privacy is a luxury that is seldom accorded to princesses, and the death of the heir presumptive to the Throne had caused too great a sensation to allow the girl he had been about to marry to escape an attention that at the time was deeply distressing to her. Thus, to ensure her the seclusion she desired, the Duchess of Teck took her daughter abroad, and there, together with Lady Wolverton, they remained for some time.

In France the Princess lived, of course, more or less in retirement. She went out very little, and devoted most of her leisure to study—still continuing to read for six hours a day—and to widening her mental horizons as far as possible. The events of the preceding year had, as may be imagined, done little or nothing to lessen her shyness or to break down the walls of her reserve, but they had certainly deepened her understanding and enlarged her sympathies. A youth of unclouded happiness, of luxury, of freedom from the cares attendant upon humanity, may be wholly delightful to the person so favoured, but it is not likely to render him sympathetic to others or understanding of any point of view but his own. No one who possesses any real knowledge of the character of Queen Mary can doubt that the experiences of her girlhood worked together for the benefit of her people.

CHAPTER SEVEN

BETROTHAL TO PRINCE GEORGE

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BETROTHAL TO PRINCE GEORGE

Return to White Lodge—Engagement to the Sailor Prince—Prince George's popularity—The nation's attitude towards Royal marriages—A résumé of conditions governing them to-day—Preparation for the wedding—Marriage in Chapel Royal, July 16th, 1893—Honeymoon at York Cottage.

PRINCESS MAY and her mother stayed abroad for nearly a year, then returned to White Lodge, where once more the Princess began to go out into society and to take up her life where it had been broken off by the death of the Duke of Clarence. Among other friendships she resumed were those with the Princesses Victoria and Maud, and Prince George. The visits of the latter to White Lodge became so numerous that towards the end of 1892 romantic rumours began to find their way into the Press, and on May 3rd, 1893, these rumours crystallised into an announcement of the engagement of Prince George to Princess May.

Intimate friends of the young couple maintain that Prince George actually proposed while walking with the Princess from White Lodge to Sheen Lodge, the residence of the Duke and Duchess of Fife, where he was then staying. Be this as it may, it is certain that on the evening of that walk Prince George went posting down to Balmoral, where Queen Victoria was then staying, and whence she announced that "Her Majesty received this evening the news of the betrothal of her grandson to Princess Victoria Mary of Teck, to which union the Queen has gladly given her consent."

This second engagement was received with enthusiasm equal to the first. Prince George, Duke of York, was if anything more popular than the Duke of Clarence, and was known to the nation as "our Sailor Prince." The popularity of Princess May's second fiancé did much to soothe the feelings of those romanticists—and they were many—who were inclined to be troubled by the shortness of the interval between the two engagements.

Our ideas concerning Royalty and their duties have changed somewhat since those days. The growth of democracy has forced members of the Royal House into close contact with the people, the popular Press has given them a hitherto undreamed-of publicity, with the result that to-day we are inclined to look upon them not so much as a race apart, but as human beings, very like ourselves, and with much the same hopes, fears, and desires as animate the bulk of mankind. We even pretend to believe that the Prince of Wales is perfectly free to choose his own bride! In 1893 they faced the facts a little more clearly, as may be gathered from the two leading newspapers of the day.

"We have the satisfaction of making the announcement for which the public will not be wholly unprepared. The understanding so long reported to exist between the Duke of York and Princess May has now taken the form of a definite betrothal, which has received the ready sanction of Her Majesty the Queen. We are certain that this intelligence will be received with sincere gratification. In the peculiar circumstances attending such a union, there must perforce be present in every mind a certain

conflict of emotion. But the predominant feeling, now that a sufficient interval has elapsed since the melancholy death of the Duke of Clarence, will be that this betrothal accords with the fitness of things, and, so far from offending any legitimate sentiment, is the most appropriate and delicate medicament for a wound, in its nature, never wholly ineffaceable. There is even ground for hoping that a union rooted in painful memories may prove happy beyond the common lot. The persons of both parties are such as to attract sympathy. On the one hand, the Duke of York enjoys not only the popularity attaching to the Navy, but also a personal good will, founded on his own frank and manly bearing on the occasions when he has come before the public. The Princess May is endeared to the public by her personal charm and her amiable disposition, by the memory of her bereavement and still more by the devotion she displayed at that trying juncture."

Thus the *Times*. The *Morning Post* was even less sentimental:

"The marriage of one who is the ultimate heir to the throne is not an event which can be regarded as purely of a private character. At the same time, the day has long since passed when the spectacle of a future monarch seeking in his spouse merely some princess who might furnish a great figure-head of state would be regarded with satisfaction by loyal Englishmen. On this account alone, then, the felicitations offered to the Duke of York will be both spontaneous and sincere. He is fortunately able to please himself, and to delight the nation at the same time by the choice of a Princess whose name has a

sympathetic charm for all, and whose future will be followed by all with constant interest. She is essentially a daughter of England; for it must not be forgotten that as a great granddaughter of George III she herself stands, howbeit remotely, in the line of succession to the throne. More, not only by birth, but by education and domicile, she belongs to England. She possesses every qualification for the high place that awaits her."

In neither of these extracts, typical of the opinion of the time, is there any suggestion that a Royal marriage should be an *affaire du cœur*. It is seemly and most desirable that the young couple should entertain a regard for each other, but love in the fuller sense of the word is not considered necessary. The chief consideration for a Royal marriage at that time, or indeed at any time, was whether the union would be good policy, and likely to prove beneficial to the nation at large. It will, perhaps, be interesting to devote a brief space to considering the whole matter of Royal marriages. This is appropriate, since the bachelorhood of the Prince of Wales has aroused a very great deal of interested comment, and it may be well to consider a few plain facts.

A century and a half ago Dr. Johnson remarked that a man who married for love was a fool—and most of his fellow countrymen agreed with him. The opinion of the populace may have changed since those days, but the famous lexicographer's opinion is still more or less endorsed in Royal circles.

It must be evident to any thinking person that the English people, however much they may approve of Royal romances in theory, would not favour them

in practice, unless the romance happened to fit in with their idea of what was appropriate, and who could guarantee that it would? In modern times Royal princes mix more or less freely with their subjects, and when a young man has unrivalled opportunities of meeting all the most attractive women of the day, and of being openly pursued by them, he is, being human, more likely to fall in love with the most seductive, rather than the most suitable.

Were a prince reared in the belief that he was at liberty to marry the first woman who succeeded in capturing his youthful fancy, and to place her on the Throne by his side, the possible danger to the country needs no stressing. The woman does not exist who would not be proud to be Queen of England or indeed of any other country, and were princes free to exercise an unfettered choice, it is not inconceivable that we might see a *fille de joie* upon a throne.

What the public really delights in is to select, through the voice of the Press, a princess who is a really suitable bride for its prince, and then to assume that it is a genuine love match. Although this pleasant fiction is growing a trifle threadbare, it harms no one, and the Press is hardly likely to let it die.

Had the Duke of Clarence lived and succeeded to the Throne with Queen Mary as his consort, the Press would have stoutly maintained that their union had been a love match, because it was pleasant so to believe. After his death had she become engaged to a foreign Prince, the same "romance" would have been woven around it, yet it is an undoubted fact that the majority of Royal marriages of convenience are at least as happy as the majority

of those founded on the tender passion, for passion is a flame that has an unhappy way of fading to dark ashes, while a mutual regard may deepen into a warm and steady glow, lighting up all the days of long life.

Over the engagement of Princess May to the Sailor Prince the romanticists indulged themselves to the full, and the Princess received enough flattery, served up with a highly sentimental sauce, to turn the head of any girl less self-controlled than she was. In accordance with her temperament she took matters with great composure, attended the congratulatory banquets, luncheons, and dinners with quiet grace, made grave little speeches of thanks to the various deputations that waited upon her, and was once again the centre of attraction wherever she went. But she did take an interest in her trousseau! There were, of course, innumerable fittings, endless interviews with modistes, milliners, bootmakers, and dressmakers of every description. One of them has left on record her impressions of her Royal patron.

"She stood more quietly than any young lady I have ever fitted, and though she must have been tired out—dresses in those days took some fitting—she never grew impatient or 'snapped' at any one. She had a wonderful idea of colour, too." Even in those days she displayed a preference for the soft blues and mauves she has favoured ever since.

It was typical of the Princess' shrinking from publicity that the public was not allowed to know much about her trousseau, certainly none of the intimate details common to the present day ever appeared; the one fact that became common knowledge was that everything was of British manufacture, a custom

most carefully followed in the trousseau of Princess Mary, when she became Viscountess Lascelles.

Queen Victoria ordered for the bride a velvet robe of Inverness tartan, from Edinburgh. This tartan was similar to that chosen by the Duke of York, when the title of Earl of Edinburgh was conferred upon him; it was also worn by the Queen's uncle, the Duke of Sussex, who at one time was also Duke of Edinburgh. The Scottish firm had carefully preserved the exact "sett" of the tartan, and the gown, though strange to modern eyes, was extremely handsome.

A gown of Royal tartan was always included in the trousseaux of Queen Victoria's daughters, and often in those of her granddaughters, too, while in regard to the clothes chosen for the latter, she insisted on having almost as much say as did their mothers. When Princess Maud of Wales first thought of marrying Prince Charles of Denmark, her august grandmother sent for her, and informed her that it was too soon after the death of Prince Henry of Battenberg, father of the present Queen of Spain, to whom Her late Majesty was greatly attached, for there to be a Royal wedding. But the Princess as usual was determined to have her own way, and managed to get round the Queen by promising to have nearly all her trousseau in half mourning, and as a result—for the Queen saw nothing odd in the arrangement—Her Majesty presented the young and lively girl with a fine collection of black and white silks, mauve, grey, and lilac gowns!

Princess May's trousseau was, of course, on conventional lines. The wedding-gown brocade was of satin, woven in Spitalfields, all the tweeds came

from Scotland, Wales supplied the flannel, while the lace came from Ireland. For her going-away dress the Princess chose a rich ribbed white silk with a mantle to match.

The wedding took place at the Chapel Royal, St. James's, on July 6th, 1893, and Queen Victoria attended in full state. The ceremony was performed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Benson, assisted by the Bishop of London and the Bishop of Rochester, and the scene was of unusual brilliance, even for a Royal wedding. Indeed, not since the marriage of "The Prince of Wales" and "the Sea King's daughter from over the sea" had a similar ceremony aroused such enthusiasm, or drawn such a marvellous array of wedding presents, which were in due course exhibited to the public.

Every nation in the world was represented, in most cases either by the reigning monarch or his heir. The late Tsar was there, as were the late King and Queen of Denmark, together with Prince and Princess Henry of Prussia. All the bridesmaids were Princesses of the English House—the Princess Victoria, the Princess Maud, Princesses Victoria Melita, Alexandra and Beatrice of Edinburgh, Princess Victoria of Schleswig-Holstein, Princess Margaret of Connaught, Princess Patricia of Connaught, Princess Alice of Albany, and Princess Ena of Battenberg.

As far as publicity went, it was the greatest ordeal the Princess had been called upon to face. Dense crowds lined the streets, filled the windows, hung perilously over roof-tops, and swarmed up every available pole in their anxiety to look upon their Sailor Prince and his chosen bride.

With her bright fair hair and good colouring, the Princess made a beautiful bride, and the genuine warmth of her reception considerably lessened her shyness, until by the time she reached the church she was giving her future subjects smile for smile. The ceremony, which did not differ in any marked degree from Royal weddings of a more recent date, went off with perfect smoothness, both bride and groom uttered their responses in audible tones, and Princess May, signing the register, wrote her maiden name none the less clearly because she was signing it for the last time.

The wedding breakfast was held at Buckingham Palace, where the newly-made Duchess of York cut the cake with her young husband's sword, according to custom immemorial. The usual speeches were made, the usual toasts drunk, and then came the going away, a moment when even Royal etiquette did not prevent the Duchess of Teck from displaying her emotion. It was a real blow to her to part with her only daughter, a daughter, moreover, who had proved of immense help to her in a hundred situations in which tact, firmness, and strength of mind were required. But she had the consolation denied to so many Royal mothers, of knowing that her daughter was not going to pass the rest of her life in a foreign country, but was to remain in her own land, and with a husband who was not only of her own nationality, but was her remote kinsman. Indeed, so thoroughly English was everything connected with the wedding that the young couple did not even go abroad for the honeymoon, but went straight to York Cottage, where they were to commence their married life.

CHAPTER EIGHT

EARLY MARRIED LIFE

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Home life at York Cottage—Gradual approach to and preparation for Queenship—Important part played by Sandringham in home life of the Royal family—King Edward as landlord and patron—Duchess of York endears herself to the tenants at Sandringham—First public duties.

WHILE there was a vast difference between the rank of Princess May of Teck, and the Duchess of York, wife of the heir to the Throne, for the first few years at least there was no more luxury at York Cottage than there had been at White Lodge. There was certainly a larger income, and wise hands to administer it, but for a woman in her position, and with the demands ever made upon that position, the Duchess of York's housekeeping allowance was not large, and during the early years of her marriage the young Duchess must often have been glad of those lessons in economy she received before her marriage.

Though small, and for a Royal residence modest in the extreme, York Cottage is a very charming little domain, and one to which King George has always been deeply attached. He has of course very early recollections of it, for it was at York Cottage that he and his brother, together with their tutor, were wont to stay when as boys they went up to Sandringham with their parents.

Sandringham itself, though an old estate, became Royal only under the reign of King Edward, who bought it from Lady Harriet Cooper, with the intention of using it as a shooting-box, but as the

Royal house parties grew larger he had York Cottage built for the accommodation of his bachelor guests. Indeed for some time it was known as "Bachelors' Cottage." It was quite a small house, so small that later when a family arrived to the Duke and Duchess of York, it became a common joke that they were got into the house with the aid of a shoe-horn.

But, before the advent of sons and a daughter, the Duchess found it ideal for the needs of her husband and herself. On the ground floor was the tiny hall, and an equally small dining-room, with a study to which the Duke and Duchess were wont to retire in the afternoon, to chat, to go through their accounts —for the first few years of her married life the Duchess did this in person—or sometimes to read. Above were the bedrooms, in one of which, decorated entirely in white and overlooking the lake in its loveliest aspect, five of the Duchess's six children were born.

The young Duchess proved herself an excellent housekeeper. It is often noted nowadays that when they are free to consult their own tastes, the King and Queen keep a very simple table, restricting themselves to a soup, fish or roast, and a plain sweet. This is done from preference now, but the habit started when it was actually a necessity in York Cottage, and at first such simplicity of living was not altogether to the Duke's taste, for at Marlborough House he had been used to a luxurious table, and a very fine wine cellar. But life on board ship had accustomed him to plainer fare, and he soon settled down to the frugality of his new ménage.

There can be little doubt that Princess May found

it far easier to go from White Lodge to York Cottage than she would have done to take up her position in one of the recognised Royal residences, and to rank herself ostentatiously as the third lady in the land. Those years at York Cottage, where she lived very much the life of the wife of a country squire, varied of course by occasional visits to town, and the social functions of her new rank, were an excellent preparation for the still higher and more responsible position she was to be called upon to fulfil in due course. She approached the Throne gradually, and was very sure of her steps.

Sandringham has always been regarded as the holiday home of the Royal family. It is there family reunions take place, there that they entertain any specially intimate friends, and there that they make a point of spending Christmas year after year; it is there also that, released from the cares of State and the public demands upon them, they become themselves. King Edward and Queen Alexandra, both before and after their accession, were no exception to the rule. It was in his Norfolk home that he ceased to be either the Prince or the *bon viveur*, and became the country gentleman, whose chief care was his estate, and whose chief interests lay within its boundaries.

When his children were little, he and the Princess were often to be seen driving about the lanes with the whole family happily packed in a waggonette, or sitting in the village church surrounded by their tenantry and the villagers, or strolling about the country, with no more formality than that shown by a country squire and his family.

King Edward was a model landlord. He not only

provided really comfortable cottages for the employees on his estate, and free education for their children, but it was his custom to pay two shillings a week more to every man and boy than was the current rate of wages in the district.

He looked after them in their hours of leisure too, and though he would not, for obvious reasons, allow a public-house to be erected upon the estate, he provided a club for the use of the men, and the lads above the age of fourteen, in which were reading rooms, rooms for talk and games, and a good library. Non-alcoholic drinks were provided at a cost considerably less than that obtaining elsewhere, and one pint of beer a day was supplied to each man.

The Prince also did a very great deal for the neighbourhood, and was particularly generous in his patronage of its churches. He interested himself in the restoration of the church of West Newton, to which he gave financial assistance, and was entirely responsible for rebuilding the church at Babingly, while he made various improvements to St. Mary Magdalene, on the edge of the park, until it became one of the most beautiful of village churches. He also rebuilt the church of Sherbourne.

As is well known, it was the Royal custom to invite various distinguished preachers to occupy the pulpit of Sandringham Church, and at one time or another, nearly every famous divine has preached to the Royal family during residence in their Norfolk home.

Both the Prince and Princess of Wales took an immense pride in making Sandringham one of the best and most artistic estates in the country. All the roads are of red gravel with clumps of rhodo-

dendrons at every corner; every cottage must conform to certain rules, and both the Prince and Princess used to go over the plans together before the final orders were given. Both were determined that nothing should ever mar the natural beauties of the estate.

Once the rector proposed that a certain footpath should be made to the church, and both his Royal parishioners went at once to look at its proposed site. "No," said the Prince, "we can't have that. The Princess likes to see the green slopes of the churchyard unbroken, and we feel it would be a scar upon the landscape."

When the Prince took over the estate, he went round himself and called upon all his prospective tenants, to find out if their dwellings were really comfortable, and many of them were rebuilt before the Hall itself was touched. During his tour the Prince dropped in *incognito* to the cottage of a widow, who in the course of a friendly conversation told him that her family had lived there for a hundred and seventy years.

"And do you still pay rent?" asked the Prince.

"Indeed I do, sir," was the answer, "and the agent is pretty sharp, I can tell you! If I couldn't find the few shillings each week I should be seeing the inside of the workhouse."

"When Mr. —— calls again, you can tell him that the Prince of Wales says he is not to take any more rent from you," the Prince told her, and was gone before the astonished dame realised to whom she had been talking.

As may be expected of so keen a sportsman, the

Prince took the greatest interest in his game preserves, which were, and still remain, some of the finest and best stocked in the Kingdom. The game room at Sandringham holds six thousand head—it is the largest in Europe—and the shooting parties were the gala events of life at Sandringham. As is well known, the Prince took a great interest in horse breeding, and like our present King was a great prize winner with both horses and cattle at the various agricultural shows.

Queen Alexandra, then Princess of Wales, had her own special interests in her Norfolk home, chief of which was the model dairy, which she visited almost every day, and where very often she, the Prince, and their daughters would take afternoon tea. Then there was the Technical School in which both she and Princess Victoria took a great interest, the gardens, and her spinning wheel, for the Princess had a fine specimen given her by Queen Victoria—who made great efforts to promote the industry amongst the tenants at Balmoral, where she kept a special wheel to be loaned to any tenant who might apply for it—and in a sunny arbour, the Princess spent many an hour's leisure, employed in one of the most ancient crafts known to womankind.

It was to this environment and atmosphere that Princess May came on her marriage, and she found it congenial. Long before her marriage she had come under the spell of the Princess of Wales, and it was that most gracious lady, a real fairy-tale princess, most charming of chatelaines, most beloved of lady bountifuls, who did much to add to her comfort and happiness during that first year at York Cottage. With

the Princess she would go round the estate learning to know the tenants, and to be known by them. Occasionally the Royal ladies would go shopping together in the village at Dersingham, or drive into King's Lynn, for the Princess had made it her custom to encourage the local tradespeople in every way possible, and nearly everything supplied to both Sandringham and York Cottage was purchased in the locality, the larger part from the village shops at Dersingham, and the remainder from King's Lynn. Of course the young Duchess of York did likewise, and there are still in the neighbourhood many tradespeople who can remember serving her, and remember, too, with what surprise, and if the truth be told in one or two instances, with what dismay they discovered that she was fully conversant with current prices, and knew quite well how many shillings there were in a sovereign.

The quiet domestic life at York Cottage was broken only by the house and shooting parties at Sandringham, and occasional visits to town. To the Duchess herself the shooting parties meant little, for the Prince of Wales was not in favour of women going out with the guns, and the Princess and her daughters never attended a shoot as participants in the sport, though they sometimes attended the sportsmen's luncheon, and then of course the Duchess of York would go with them.

The Prince of Wales made it a rule never to attend a public ceremonial without having some of the ladies of his family with him, but on certain occasions the Duchess of York deputised for the Princess, and at these times her grave, quiet dignity

and her regal mien gave excellent promise for the future. Sandringham certainly did something to remove her shyness and to lessen the reserve which has never wholly left her, while her new duties, her new environment, and, perhaps in a measure, her new importance, helped her to expand and to develop her social gifts.

The Duke and Duchess naturally attended all the important Court functions. They were in town for the Opening of Parliament, most of the Drawing-Rooms, and the usual ceremonies graced by Royalty; they stayed too at Windsor, now and then visited Aldershot and the Isle of Wight, and were of course present at the annual memorial service held at Frogmore, in memory of the Prince Consort.

During the first year of her married life the Duchess began that long list of official functions associated with Royalty, by opening the new wing of a hospital at Edinburgh, whither she and the Duke had travelled to receive the wedding-gift subscribed for by that City, while in that same year there were other official visits with various ceremonies to perform.

By the end of that first year the people at Sandringham had grown to know their future Queen, and to have for her the regard which has been steadily growing in the hearts of her present subjects. They had penetrated the barrier of reserve and found that behind it lay real kindliness of heart, a very earnest desire to be worthy of her high position, and a great, very great, dependability. In her visits to the people on the estate, she had not very much to say, but always she remembered what was said to her, and

the next time she called there were enquiries after Johnny's cough, or Baby's rash, while whatever was promised was sent at once, and never on any account overlooked.

She understood, and that was the great thing, these stories of sickness, poverty, and frailty, to which she listened on occasions; they were received not only with sympathy, but with comprehension, and the suggestions made were of practical value. One young woman to whom the Duchess paid a visit of congratulation on the advent of a first baby, was lamenting the small amount of cupboard room in her cottage. "A set of shelves would help you," came the advice. "See, if they were put just here, they would be out of the way, and with a little curtain in front, would hardly be noticed. I will have the wood sent down to you, and no doubt your husband could put them up."

"He's not much of a handy man that way," the woman said.

"Isn't he. What a pity! the Duke is so useful in the house."

"Maybe he is, ma'am," came the blunt announcement, "but then I didn't have the sense to marry a sailor."

In the late spring of 1894 certain activities began to be observed at York Cottage, happy activities, foretelling happy anticipation. In the new wing lately added preparations were made for a visitor, a very important visitor, and by the end of May all England knew that the Duchess was, in the words of the newspaper announcements, "expecting a happy event."

CHAPTER NINE

FAMILY LIFE AT YORK COTTAGE

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FAMILY LIFE AT YORK COTTAGE

Birth of Prince Edward, June 24th, 1894, at White Lodge—Return to York Cottage—Birth of Prince Albert, Princess Mary, and Princes Henry, George, and John—Family life—The Prince of Wales and his porridge—Domestic happenings and nursery episodes.

ON June 24th, 1894, a pealing of bells and a firing of cannon announced to an interested populace the birth of a Prince, an heir to the Duke and Duchess of York, and a direct successor to the Throne of England. All day long the roads leading from London to Richmond—for the Duchess of York returned to White Lodge and the motherly care of the Duchess of Teck, for her first accouchement—were thronged with carriages bearing members of the Royal family, and their friends, to make enquiries after the new arrival. The number of distinguished visitors was so great that it was impossible for the Duke of York to receive them all in person as he had hoped to do, and the visitors' book had to be placed on a table outside the entrance to White Lodge, and there, from early morning till dusk, the stream of signatories filed past.

According to custom the Duke of York, together with the Prince of Wales and the Prime Minister, had been awaiting the announcement of the birth, and very soon after the young Prince's entrance into the world, the head nurse carried him in to his father and grandfather, who were delighted to find him a fine baby with excellent lung power!

Both the Princess of Wales and the Duchess of Teck were with the young mother, and when Prince Edward was three days old he received a visit from his great-grandmother, Queen Victoria, who was pleased to approve of him unreservedly!

The selection of the new baby's names had been a matter of consideration, not only for his father and mother, but for his grand-parents also. Family interest was of course consulted, but the Duke was anxious that the names should also be symbolic of the United Kingdom, so after Queen Victoria had given her final vote, he was christened Edward Albert Christian George Andrew Patrick David while it was understood that he was to be publicly known as Prince Edward. This particularly pleased the Duchess of Teck, who, great admirer of the Edwards of history, wanted to see her grandson their illustrious successor, but to the Princess of Wales "Prince Eddie" recalled too poignantly the late Duke of Clarence, whom she had never ceased to mourn, and thus it was arranged that in the family circle the newcomer should be called David, as of course he is at the present time.

Prince Edward behaved well at his christening—the Archbishop remarked on his weight—ate, slept, and throve, after the manner of all healthy babies, and when a few weeks old he was taken to York Cottage, while in York House—a wing of St. James's Palace used by his parents as their town house—a suite of rooms was prepared for him, when he should be brought to London.

The Duchess was a fond and proud, but by no means a foolishly fond mother. She took her

Speaight

THREE OF THE ROYAL CHILDREN

H.R.H. Princess Mary. H.R.H. the Prince of Wales. H.R.H. the Duke of York.

parenthood, as she took the remainder of her duties, very seriously, and while she did a great deal herself for her baby, even from his earliest days she made up her mind not to spoil him, and Prince Edward, in common with the children that came after, was taught obedience. He needed the lessons, for he was a very self-willed baby, who adored his mother, and while almost always good in her arms was at other times given to tantrums she alone could soothe. The Duchess's second son, Prince Albert, was born on December 14th, 1895, and Prince Edward, who despite his mother's efforts had not escaped a certain amount of spoiling from his many relatives, by no means welcomed the newcomer, seeing in him a usurper of what he had come to consider his own rights. When the two brothers were introduced for the first time, and the Duke bade his elder son kiss the new arrival, Prince Edward flatly refused, and no amount of inducement could prevail upon him. Another grievance was that his nurse, to whom he was much attached, was transferred to the new baby, and a new one given to him, but this he firmly declined to permit, and yelled his disapproval with such persistence that he won the day and got his nurse back again.

By the time Princess Mary was born, fifteen months later—in the year of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee—he had got over his jealousy, and he welcomed his baby sister with great politeness, though rumour has it that he strongly objected to her being christened, when by his mother's special wish, a golden bowl that had been one of her wedding presents was used instead of a font. On

this occasion he howled so loudly that he had to be taken away.

Another son, Prince Henry, was born on March 31st, 1900, a fifth, Prince George, on December 20th, 1902, and the sixth and last, Prince John, on July 12th, 1905.

To the Duchess the coming of a daughter meant a very great deal. As an only daughter herself she knew well what a companion such a child can be, and it was, perhaps, because she felt herself in danger of spoiling the only girl in a family of six, that she brought up the Princess even more strictly than she did her boys.

"Mary's brothers spoiled her so thoroughly," the Queen once told a friend, "that over and over again I have had to harden my heart, and be far more strict than I had any wish to be." A remark that does much to explain Princess Mary's rather severe upbringing.

The Duchess did not always find her nursery easy to manage. There were not infrequent skirmishes between the two elder boys, for Prince Edward made the most of his seniority; it was always "Me and Bertie" from the cradle, but Prince Albert had his own ideas on the matter, and on one occasion their mother was shocked to find her two sons indulging in the ancient art of fisticuffs. She hurried forward to separate them, but the Duke laid a restraining hand on her arm. "Let them fight it out," he said, "they will make all the better men for it."

Some at least of the great charm of manner which to-day belongs to the Prince of Wales is doubtless due to the fact that from his earliest childhood he

was taught to give way to others, by no means always an easy lesson, for he was self-willed and impatient of control.

Once when the Duchess of York had taken him to see his grandmother at White Lodge, the two ladies and the little Prince went to call upon an old friend in Richmond, who happened to have a little grandson staying with her. The two children played together, and, child-like, Prince Edward took a fancy to his little companion's toy, and refused to give it up. The owner of the wooden horse grabbed it manfully, and his grandmother apologised for his behaviour. "My little grandson does not realise he is rebuffing his future King."

"That does not signify," said the Duchess of York. "Prince Edward must be taught to give way to others," and the horse was straightway surrendered.

It was the custom for the Royal children to kiss Queen Victoria's hand and not her cheek, but this was a practice Prince Edward could not quite understand. For some time he declined to follow it, and he was nearly six years old before he would do it of his own free will.

Both the Duke and Duchess combined to bring up their children in a simple and unaffected way, and the young people at York Cottage had considerably more family life than is customary among Royal children.

The moment they were old enough to understand "table manners," they were allowed to have their meals with their parents. The present Prince of Wales still dimly remembers at breakfast, when he was eating his breakfast porridge, being admonished

by his father in the following words: "David my boy, if you cannot eat your porridge like a little gentleman you must go away and eat it in the nursery." To which, like a good little Victorian, the small David answered with a polite "Yes, papa."

As the Prince remarked when relating the incident: "If I eat porridge nicely nowadays it is my father who deserves the praise."

But correction was not the chief feature of the family life at York Cottage in those days. There were games, boisterous fun, in which both the Duke and Duchess sometimes took part, or were sometimes amused spectators. The Duke believed in letting childish high spirits have their normal outlet, and interfered only on such occasions as when Prince Edward, growing tired of the more usual strokes of tennis, attempted a "mashie" shot that sent the ball crashing through the window of the library, where his father was having an afternoon nap. Since then the Prince of Wales has always been a rather nervous tennis player!

The Duchess, though she took an active part in the direction of the children's games, never went so far as to play bears with them. It was left for Edward VII to do that, going down on his knees in the nursery, and terrifying Princess Mary, while he growled fiercely at Prince Edward, who with the help of a cardboard sword was killing him.

The Duchess did her best to invent games that were instructive as well as amusing, for she much wished to implant in her children her own love of reading and of the gaining of knowledge beyond the ordinary educational routine. At the present day the Duke

of York most closely resembles his mother in this way, though he is not so desirous of wisdom as she was at his age.

It was the Duchess who, one wet day when the ordinary nursery amusements palled, introduced the card game called "The Counties of England" to the children. This game somewhat resembles "Happy Families," only instead of collecting the families of the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick maker, one collects the counties and their chief towns. It has the merit of being instructive as well as amusing, but the Royal children did not consider this an advantage, and a member of the household tells me that the first time she entered the nursery after the game was started, she heard Prince Albert asking his brother for "Newcastle, the capital of Devonshire," and in reply receiving the demand for "Sandringham, the capital of the world," and soon after they had invented a game of their own, which could by no stretch of imagination be called instructive.

But though in their games the children showed no great thirst for instruction, they were always very ready to receive it when it came from their mother, disguised as a story. In 1901 the happiest moments of the day at York Cottage were in the evening just before bedtime, when the Duchess was telling them their bedtime story. Cunningly disguised beneath the tale of two small children called Tommy and Mary, who had the most unusual adventures all over Europe, was a description of the foreign places Princess May had visited, together with a quantity of useful information as to the habits of the peoples of France and Switzerland. Later, as the tour of the

Duke and Duchess to India and Australia drew near, in obedience to the wishes of the listeners, Tommy and Mary extended their travels to the Indian Empire and the Antipodes, and long before their father and mother set sail on their Empire tour, the children had a very good notion of the British Empire.

So simple was the upbringing of the Royal children that their first lessons were received from the village schoolmaster, who told many tales of his high-spirited young pupils, and their early efforts to master the three R's. Later, of course, there were tutors for the boys. Mr. H. P. Hansell had a great deal to do with the training of the Prince of Wales, while Princess May's own governess, Mme. Bricka, helped with the education of Princess Mary, who also had a French governess to whom she was much attached.

Though, with the Duchess, their studies came first, physical culture was by no means neglected. A healthy mind in a healthy body was ever the Duke's aim, and he himself superintended his sons' riding lessons, and taught them the rudiments of cricket and football, tennis and squash racquets. The Prince of Wales, who is, of course, a first-class exponent of the last-mentioned game, owes much of his proficiency to his father, who was his constant partner in his boyhood.

Princess Mary shared her brother's equestrian exercises, and indeed was fully their equal in the saddle, showing a fearlessness, and an understanding of her mounts that has since stood her in good stead in the hunting field. Though Queen Mary has never been greatly interested in women's sports, and does not in her heart approve of any but the mildest

athletics for girls, yet, remembering her own somewhat cramped youth, she not only permitted, but encouraged Princess Mary in physical culture exercises, and in her teens the Princess attended special classes in Swedish drill and gymnastics.

While the cares of her family absorbed most of her energies, and it may be, gave her her happiest hours, there were, of course, the social and Court functions connected with her position which could not be neglected, and, through those quiet years preceding the death of Queen Victoria, the Duchess gained, not self-possession—that has always been hers—but more self-confidence. Small talk she has never excelled in, but she certainly grew to speak more freely, to say perhaps more what her hearers expected, than what she herself considered applicable. Certainly she improved in public speaking, a task she greatly dislikes, and from which she will always excuse herself if at all possible. When it is not, her words, though few, are sincere and much to the point, as indeed are all her utterances.

At Sandringham the "Squire's lady" had made for herself a niche in the hearts of her neighbours. She took a real interest in all village affairs, and now her added personal experience as wife and mother had widened her sympathies, so that she found it easier to talk to other wives and mothers, or to pay those visits of kindness or condolence, which when made in the company of the Duchess of Teck, had often found her tongue-tied.

Naturally at this period of her life with a family growing up about her, a family moreover to whom she gave as much attention as many a mother with no

other claims upon her time, the Duchess of York could not keep up that six hours of daily reading upon which she had embarked when Princess May, but she still devoted as much leisure to her books as possible, and before her Empire tour she studied not only the geography of the countries she was about to visit, but their history, and the history of their great men, and it was largely owing to this study that she was found prepared for every happening during the tour, and why no presentation found her at a loss.

CHAPTER TEN

THE QUEEN AND THE EMPIRE

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First Colonial tour—Death of Queen Victoria—Prince and Princess of Wales in Australia and Canada—Prince Edward's early liking for riding—Effect of tour on the Princess.

IN the spring of 1901, when Prince Edward was under seven years of age and Prince Henry still an infant in arms, the Duchess of York accompanied the Duke on a Colonial Tour lasting nearly eight months. This tour was the first of a series of similar journeys undertaken by the heirs to the Throne, a circumstance which invested it with additional importance. All her life Queen Mary has been really fond of travelling; even before her marriage she had for her time and age had considerable experience of its pleasures. It is possible she would have preferred to travel incognito, a pleasure that has never been hers, and to avoid the presentations, the speech-making, and the innumerable banquets that are associated with Royal visits, but even as it is she really enjoys the tours she occasionally makes, and, it may be added, she profits by them to an extent rare in any Royal traveller. Yet that first tour nearly thirty years ago was by no means all pleasure, since it entailed her first real separation from her family, a separation she confessed to friends she shrank from making, but from which there was no escape.

Just before the Duke and Duchess were due to sail on the *Ophir*, Queen Victoria died. Although at her age the fatal termination of her illness was not wholly unexpected, her death was a serious

blow to the whole nation. To-day it has become more or less the fashion to regard her as a plump little self-assertive woman, whose outstanding quality was an immense sense of her own importance, and it is certain that, some fifteen years before her death, her popularity with her subjects was not overwhelming. But at the time of her death she was venerated and esteemed by the Empire at large, as a symbol of everything the Empire stood for. She was in many respects a truly regal figure, and her unwavering confidence in the Divine Right of Kings gave her an air of dignity hard to imagine in these ultra-democratic days.

Queen Mary had a great veneration for her august kinswoman: she was with her when she died, and throughout the whole of her life she has kept a vivid and affectionate memory of the great little woman who wielded the sceptre for over sixty years. She has also brought her children up to hold their great-grandmother in the highest esteem, and to think of her as she really was, and not as either the ultra sentimentalist or the ultra realist would portray her.

The death of Queen Victoria naturally made the position of the Duke and Duchess of York rather different, for with King Edward on the Throne, they became Prince and Princess of Wales and direct heirs to the Throne, so that for some time it was in doubt as to whether the proposed tour would really be undertaken. There was to take place the foundation ceremonies of the new Commonwealth of Australia, in which New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, Tasmania, and Western Australia were to be united in a Federal Parliament, and it was felt

that it would be well if the Duke and Duchess should be present. Thus it was decided that the tour should be carried out as it had been arranged before the death of the Queen.

The *Ophir* left Portsmouth on March 16th, and, schooled as was the Duchess in controlling and hiding her emotions, she could not wholly conceal her grief at leaving her children, though King Edward himself had promised to be personally responsible for their well-being.

The Royal party halted at Gibraltar, Malta, and Aden, where there were the usual receptions, presentations, speeches and gifts.

In Ceylon the reception was particularly warm, and the Duchess did a great amount of very interested sight-seeing, accumulating an amount of knowledge that surprised her hearers when, on her return home, she told of her travels. Ceylon seems to have made a great impression upon her, for it was in many respects wholly unlike the other places she had visited; she would willingly have lingered there for a time had the official itinerary permitted. Long before the Duchess felt she had exhausted the beauties of the island, the *Ophir* was on its way to Australia, where the really hard work of the tour began.

Melbourne accorded the Royal visitors a welcome with which both the Duke and Duchess were plainly delighted. It gave an added interest and pleasure to the many ceremonies they attended, beginning with the Commonwealth Parliament, which was opened with a pomp and distinction worthy of the occasion. This over, there were municipal banquets, various other opening ceremonies to be performed, and

places and buildings of importance to be visited, with military reviews and official receptions of every description.

As may be imagined, the Duchess was presented with a great variety of gifts, varying from jewels to live animals, but what pleased her most were the presents given her by the Minister of Education, for her own little ones at home, and her first action on returning to the Royal headquarters was to sit down and write to the children telling them of the delights in store for them when she returned home.

At Auckland, which the Royal party visited after Melbourne, there was a wonderful military review—the greatest spectacle of its kind ever seen in New Zealand—besides a repetition of many of the Melbourne ceremonies. Perhaps the most interesting of the public functions was the laying of the foundation stone of the Queen Victoria High School for Maori girls; there was also a fine and most picturesque reception by 6,000 Maoris, who presented the visitors with native gifts, and who interested the Duchess greatly. She talked with several of the chiefs, upon whom her regal presence and striking fairness made a great impression. This was the part of the tour in which, when she returned home, her children displayed the keenest interest, and after begging their mother for every detail she could recall, there were high jinks in the nurseries, with "Maori" costumes culled from various odds and ends, and a Maori war dance in which the present Prince of Wales specially distinguished himself!

The Duke of York was deeply impressed with his visit to Tasmania, where he and the Duchess saw a

special demonstration of tree felling in the mighty forests. The Duke was very anxious to take a hand in the felling, but this could not be permitted, for the task is dangerous, so the Royal visitor had to be content with handling the axes, and talking to the men, not only about the felling but also about the methods of transit employed in moving the enormous logs.

When the tour had first been mooted, it had been hoped to include a brief exploration of South Africa, but the Boer War was still in progress, so that Maritzburg and Cape Town were the only places to which the Royal Party travelled.

Quebec and Montreal came next in the itinerary, and at both places there were enthusiastic receptions. At Montreal the Duchess received, amongst other gifts, a maple leaf—Canada's national emblem—in gold, set with diamonds, and it is this ornament that she never fails to wear at any ceremony at which Canadians are to be present.

Ottawa provided something new in the way of entertainments for the Royal party. This was a kind of pageant staged in a forest, in which was shown various scenes depicting the life of the lumbermen, at work and at play. The whole thing was very cleverly done, and afforded the spectators a real insight into the lives of men who work for months at a time away from the amenities of civilisation, and whose chief food is the famous "pork and beans" of which both the Duke and Duchess partook before the entertainment was over.

On the whole the tour was highly successful, though to be frank Queen Mary was not so popular or

so efficient an ambassador as the present Prince of Wales, partly because she has always lacked his gracious geniality, and also because it was to a large extent a pioneer tour, and the pathway of the pioneer is notoriously hard. Even while travelling she could not wholly overcome her shy reserve, and the warm-hearted, expansive Colonials sometimes mistook this shyness for hauteur.

It was not that she was unpopular: far from it. It was simply that she was often misunderstood, and her really fine qualities underestimated. The wife of an Indian judge, who met her when the *Ophir* was anchored outside Colombo, gives us a picture of her as a stately, though somewhat silent figure, presiding over the dinner table and doing her best not to appear bored with the proceedings. Though it must at times be quite impossible for any Royal traveller to avoid boredom, as a matter of fact Queen Mary, who has enjoyed all her tours, regarded those months of travelling as one of the most valuable periods of her life. All her letters written home at that time contain the words "How really wonderful such and such a thing or city is."

At home her children were getting on as well as they could without the mother who had made them her constant care. King Edward had kept his promise to look after them. He seized every available opportunity to visit York Cottage, and the present Prince of Wales always asserts that his grandfather was the only person who really spoiled him. King Edward had a natural fund of high spirits that were not hampered by any sense of direct parental responsibility, and he did his best to encourage Prince Edward

Russell

THE LATE DUCHESS OF TECK AND QUEEN MARY AT WHITE LODGE, 1891

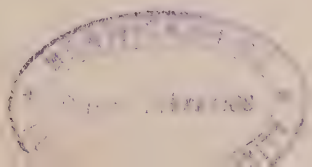
in his youthful ambition to become an engine driver, in spite of the protestations of brother Albert, that *he* was going to be the engine driver, but that Edward might be his fireman.

It was King Edward who first put Prince Edward on a horse. Though not a first-class horseman himself, he was very anxious that his grandsons should do well in the saddle: "It will do them no harm to take a tumble or two," he said to the Prince's tutor, Mr. Hansell. "Put them on a quiet pony, and let them carry on in their own way."

But even King Edward was not prepared for his grandson's enthusiasm for his new pastime. Within a week of his first ride, he announced to his grandfather that he wanted to go fox-hunting at once. As it was the middle of summer, and the first meet was some months ahead, the King had an excellent reason for refusing. But Prince Edward clung firmly to his new ambition.

When the *Ophir* arrived at Portsmouth with his father and mother on board, he and his brothers and sister were waiting to greet their parents. Before the official greetings were given, a launch brought off the Royal children to the ship, where rapturous reunions took place. "Oh, Mama!" said Prince Edward as he hugged the Duchess, "I am glad that you're back. I've looked after them all right, an' I've learned to ride, an' oh, Mama! may I go out hunting this season with my pony?"

Glad as the Princess was to be back with her family once more, she felt and said on many occasions that that tour had done more for her than anything which had gone before it, to prepare her for the Throne.



She has never been a woman to refuse to face any serious criticism, and certain comments on that tour caused her to resolve to make a renewed effort to overcome her natural diffidence and to realise that if she were shy of her future subjects, they in their turn were far more shy of her, a fact she had not understood to its full extent. The influences of that tour have stayed with her all her life, and have indeed had the happiest effects in her later contact with Colonial visitors to Great Britain; she has again and again astonished people presented to her by her vivid memory of things and places seen nearly thirty years ago.

It is, as we know, customary to credit every Royal personage with a marvellous memory, particularly for faces. As a matter of fact, every Royal child destined to be of any importance has to undergo a kind of memory training, as part of the ordinary education, for it will be readily understood how vastly important it is that they shall recognise people readily, and be able to recall names and certain events connected with them. Facts, data, strings of figures, all can be supplied by secretaries, but no official can supply a memory; hence its importance in the Royal curriculum. But Queen Mary has a genuinely remarkable memory for faces—a trait she has passed on to the Prince of Wales—and quite recently amazed a lady she encountered, by recognising her as a member of a reception committee which had been presented to her at Montreal, while to a friend who was driving with her, she once pointed out in a crowd an official who had acted as guide during her visit to Ceylon.

To an intimate friend with whom she was talking over her impressions of the tour, she remarked that it had immensely deepened her sense of responsibility —always one of her outstanding qualities. The Queen has always been intensely, even insularly patriotic, but her Colonial tour had shown her not a country but an Empire, an Empire moreover composed of different peoples, possessing very different characteristic qualities, which must always be taken into account if they are to remain prosperous and content, under one flag and one Sovereign. It is doubtful if anything could have bred in her the cosmopolitan outlook that made King Edward so successful in fostering the friendships of nations, but that sense of responsibility has caused her by constant effort to come to a better understanding of qualities and opinions that are not essentially English.

Queen Mary has always been a highly observant traveller, whether the journeys be small or great. She says little at all times, so little that her silence is, to those who do not know her, apt to be misleading ; but later she will astonish and often confuse her companions by describing in details something they had altogether overlooked.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

AT HOME AND ABROAD

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AT HOME AND ABROAD

Close friendship with and admiration for Queen Alexandra—Queen's methodical housekeeping and economy—India tour of 1905—Queen's keen perception and memory—A week in Egypt—Visits to Spain and Norway—Charitable activities—Keir Hardie's tributes to the Queen.

VERY few people realise that Queen Mary was Princess of Wales for nearly as long as she has been Queen of England. There was no sudden romance about her accession to the Throne. In Victorian times they provided for the accession to the Throne a long time in advance, and by the time Queen Victoria died there were four generations of direct heirs.

This affords a striking comparison with the present state of affairs : the King has passed through an illness that I may say quite candidly almost proved fatal, without there being any sign of a wife for the Prince of Wales, or any direct heir beyond the second generation.

With Queen Mary it was very different; for seventeen years of her married life she had been quietly preparing for the position she was to fill. During the lifetime of Queen Victoria her social engagements were naturally subordinate to those of the Princess of Wales, but with the accession of Edward VII she became the second lady in the land, and her duties increased accordingly. Much of the home life that had been such a pleasant feature of her first seven years of marriage had to go, and her time was taken up with social and public ceremonies,

opening bazaars and similar functions, laying foundation stones, attending banquets, entertaining, and the thousand and one such duties as fall to the lot of the Princess of Wales.

This, of course, meant that she was increasingly in the limelight. The Princess of Wales was a much more important person than the Duchess of York, her movements were chronicled, her dresses described, and her every word reported. With our knowledge of Queen Mary's character, it is easy to understand that this afforded her no particular pleasure, but it did increase her determination to live up to the nation's expectation, and to shirk nothing that could be demanded of her. With Queen Alexandra she was always on the happiest of terms, and the former's abounding popularity was for her a matter of genuine pleasure. More than once she openly envied Queen Alexandra that winning graciousness, that extraordinary aptitude for the felicitous phrase, spoken at just the right moment, which made her so great a favourite with all classes, and in many ways she made an effort to model her public appearances on those of the woman whose place she was one day to take. But our present Queen has a personality far too strong to be in any great degree capable of alteration, and though her own efforts and the pressure of circumstances have to a certain extent moulded her to the recognised Royal pattern, yet her individuality expresses itself in a hundred ways.

As Princess of Wales the Royal income was naturally larger than had been that of the Duke and Duchess of York, but Queen Mary has always inclined to economy, which is doubtless one of the reasons

she took so easily to the rationing schemes during the War, and even in her clothes she showed no love of extravagance or display. Her toilettes were always fitting; they were, when the occasion demanded, of a suitable magnificence, but her private tastes have always inclined to simplicity, and even as Princess of Wales, when she ordered a dress, she first asked for the modiste's estimate before deciding. On one occasion the dressmaker, being unused to her Royal patron's methods, sent in her estimate and received the order, but when the dress was sent home there was an additional bill for "extras." The Princess paid the bill without question, but—that dressmaker never received another order.

Throughout the whole of her life it has been Queen Mary's invariable custom to go through her accounts every six weeks. As Duchess of York she did this unaided, but after she became Princess of Wales a secretary prepared the bills for her attention; even to-day, when the demands upon Royalty's time are unceasing, the Queen looks through each account before it is passed for payment.

In spite of her increased duties as Princess of Wales, Queen Mary made it an almost unbreakable rule that one day in the week should be set aside for her children, while upon all days they came down to tea at Marlborough House if at all possible. All the members of the Royal family are good friends to a vast number of charitable institutions, and though such patronage is expected of them, Princess Mary and her brothers were brought up to think of others, and not only to think of them but to work for them. One hour of each weekday had to be spent in making

some article of practical use for poorer children, while upon birthdays each of the Royal children was required to give six of his toys to a poor child of his own age.

Upon one occasion, when the Boer War was at its height and Lord Roberts was the hero of the hour, the Princess of Wales was explaining to her children that the toys they gave must not be only those of which they were tired, but something that really cost them a pang to part with. Prince Edward, listening, looked thoughtful. "Then, Mama," he said at length, "I must part with my statue of 'Bobs'."

It was by Queen Mary's own special wish that each child was taught to include in his prayers a petition for "all unhappy people."

As Princess of Wales, Queen Mary travelled extensively, her most important tour being that of India in 1905. This tour lasted seven months, and was to the Princess by far the most enthralling journey she had undertaken. Later, of course, she and King George visited India for the Delhi Durbar, but that was more or less a series of magnificent ceremonies which, though of profound interest and unparalleled splendour, could not at times have failed to be somewhat wearisome. The tour of 1905—which extended over 9,000 miles of British territory in India and Burma—though official, was less formal than the Durbar, and the Princess could indulge her fondness for investigating the ways of the people and the customs of the country to a greater extent. Of this tour she herself said:

"One of my chief objects in this tour is to see as

much as possible of my Indian sisters, for I believe the more I see of the reality of your lives, the more I shall regard and esteem the high qualities for which the Indian woman is renowned."

The Royal travellers received a most enthusiastic welcome wherever they went, and for the Princess a special ceremony was prepared by Indian ladies, in which she was the central figure in various ancient customs, destined to bring good fortune upon her. The ladies showered gold upon her path; one of them threw a cloud of real pearls around her: mystic rites, which included the passing of a gold veil seven times around her head, were performed, and the whole ceremony was not only interesting but profoundly impressive, and of course wholly unlike anything in which the Princess had hitherto participated.

There were processions and pageants, scenes of Oriental magnificence and barbaric splendour, war dances, parades of native warriors, of elephants—one great chief conducted them to a forest clearing, for marvellous exhibitions of wild elephants—and for King George, of course, wonderful sport, including "bags of tigers and other big game."

At Lucknow the Prince and Princess inspected thirty survivors of the Indian Mutiny, and at Calcutta the Princess was presented with a wonderful diamond and pearl necklace which, to the great delight of the native chiefs, she at once put round her neck.

There were, of course, numerous official ceremonies to be performed, including the laying of a foundation for a hospital for women at Hyderabad, but there were still opportunities for the Princess to gain a

real knowledge of the country, in so far as India reveals herself to the European eye, and her travels frankly delighted her. The entire strangeness of her surroundings, the magic of the East, the beauty of the panorama that was daily unfolded before her, all combined to hold her interest, and not once during that seven months' tour could any onlooker say with truth "she seemed bored with the proceedings."

True to her custom, she asked innumerable questions concerning everything she saw, and digested the information given her so well, that at the time of the Durbar she was able to delight and surprise some of the native chiefs presented to her, by her knowledge of their section of the country. The pageants and the processions she enjoyed, but it cannot be said she derived any real enjoyment from some of the native dances she witnessed, particularly an exhibition by a party of Khords, who had not long been cured of their ancient custom of offering human sacrifices! But she shirked nothing and, at the end of the tour, herself remarked that it had, in itself, been an education she would on no account have missed.

On the homeward journey the Prince and Princess spent a week in Egypt, and visited King George of Greece at Athens. At that time King Edward and Queen Alexandra were on a Mediterranean cruise, and the Royal party met at Corfu, afterwards enjoying a combined holiday at Athens.

Greece made a tremendous appeal to the Princess of Wales, an appeal that was no doubt heightened by its contrast with the scenes from which she had just

returned, and it was her interest in the country and her many references to it, that made Princess Mary eager to visit it after her marriage.

India was only part of the Princess's travels during that period, for, very shortly after they had returned to England, she and the Prince set out again for Madrid, there to represent King Edward and Queen Alexandra at the marriage of King Alfonso to Princess Ena of Battenberg, a visit marred by the tragedy of the wedding day, when bombs were thrown at the Royal procession. It so happened that the carriage containing the Prince and Princess was following closely behind that of the bridal couple, and had the bombs taken full effect, a double tragedy would surely have occurred.

They returned to England almost immediately after the wedding ceremonies, but their stay was brief, for by June 22nd they were in Norway for the coronation of King Haakon and Queen Maud. Thus during that year at least, even so enthusiastic a traveller as Queen Mary was glad when her journeyings were over, and she was able to settle down at home.

With the accession of King Edward, Court life had undergone certain drastic changes. As has already been mentioned, King Edward had an appreciation of good company, and though he did not, as his traducers were fond of saying, often forget his kingly dignity, he certainly did welcome people whom his mother would have barred from her Court.

Not so the Prince and Princess of Wales. The latter showed the same preferences when Princess, as

she has when on the Throne; thus the difference between her circle and that of the King was almost as marked as it had been between that of King Edward, when Prince of Wales, and Queen Victoria. Of Queen Mary it can be said that at no time in her life did she make, or even tolerate, any friends whom she would not welcome as companions for her children.

As her social duties increased, so did her charitable activities, and it was while she was Princess of Wales that Queen Mary began to display to a marked degree that interest in child welfare which has remained one of her outstanding characteristics. She became a regular contributor to the Fresh Air Fund—in which the Prince of Wales is also interested—and was a firm supporter of the Happy Evenings Association, and the Invalid Children's Aid Society, to name but a few of the charities which claimed her patronage.

Her interest was practical in the extreme. Her personal activities in her own nursery had given her a knowledge of all things pertaining to child life, and also an insight into the child mind that surprised and sometimes embarrassed those who, anticipating her visits, expected to find merely a gracious lady, willing to accept all she saw at its face value.

On one occasion she had announced her intention, without giving much notice, of visiting a children's institution. The matron, somewhat flurried at the idea of the Royal visit—the first of its kind—selected six of the brightest and prettiest youngsters, dressed them in their best, and put them on show, ready primed for the coming of the Princess. But the

Royal lady did not appear even to see them. It was the other children who, just as they were, monopolised her entire attention and to whom she talked during the whole of her visit. This incident is typical of the Queen. She sees below the surface, and if what she sees displeases her, the society that has sought her patronage is acquainted with the fact.

The years when she was Princess of Wales were probably the happiest of Queen Mary's life. She had not the full responsibilities of the Throne, or the exacting demands which are the inevitable accompaniment of Sovereignty. She had escaped the straitened means and often harassing circumstances of her girlhood, her children were growing up satisfactorily—with the exception of Prince John, who was delicate from babyhood—and the country over which she was to reign as Queen Consort, was at the height of its prosperity, with as yet little hint of the dark shadows which were to gather in the future.

Peaceful years they were, happy prosperous years, and if we look upon the portraits of the Princess of Wales who lived through them, we shall find their influence in the serenity of her expression and in her more frequent smile.

It has always been an infectious smile. Queen Mary's natural expression inclines to gravity—it always has done—but when she laughs it is a real laugh, with real amusement in it, a mirth far removed from the conventional smirk sometimes seen on Royal faces. Keir Hardie, ardent socialist, anti-Royalist, and anti- many other things, once said of

her, "When that woman laughs she does laugh, and not make a contortion, like so many Royalties."

It was Keir Hardie, too, who spoke admiringly of Queen Mary's motherliness, compliments that, coming from such a quarter, were, as estimates of character, worth more than the most honeyed speeches of the courtier or the panegyrics of an adulatory Press.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE CROWNED QUEEN

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Coronation, June 22nd 1911—The ceremony and its grandeur—The regalia—Death of Queen's brother, Prince Francis of Teck—Investiture of Prince Edward.

KING GEORGE and Queen Mary became King and Queen of England in May 1910. According to custom, however, they were not actually crowned until the following year, but in 1911 occurred many other ceremonies besides that of the actual Coronation. King Edward had been in ill health for some time before his death, and during his illness King George, often accompanied by Queen Mary, had frequently deputised for his father, much in the way the present Prince of Wales did for his father during his recent illness. Thus both their Majesties came to the Throne fully prepared for the part they were called upon to play.

The Coronation took place in Westminster Abbey on June 22nd, 1911, and few will dispute that Queen Mary was the most regal figure in that most imposing ceremony. It was the finest piece of pageantry that the nation had seen since the Diamond Jubilee. Against the age-old background of the sombre walls of the Abbey there was a blaze of colour, a glitter of gold, and the many-hued radiance of jewels. Kings and Queens, Princes and Princesses, Ambassadors, naval and military chiefs, peers and peeresses, diplomats, and the great ones of the earth, sat in serried ranks with the sun slanting in through the stained glass windows, striking fire from their swords,

their medals, and their jewels. And all this magnificence focussed itself on the figures of the King and Queen, impressive in the sweeping robes of purple and ermine. Against the background of the Queen's robes shone forth those Crown Jewels that have graced the crowning of a score of English monarchs, and glittering above them all the thousand facets of the Koh-i-Noor diamond, an ancient treasure of the Eastern Kings.

From my seat in the Abbey, I could not help visualising the greedy Blücher, licking his thick lips, and muttering "What a city to sack," and behind a pillar I seemed to see lurking the braggart figure of Captain Blood, the shadow of the axe on his neck, as he gazed at the jewels he had lost his life to steal.

The mitred figure of the aged Archbishop of Canterbury, with slow, stately movements, took from the purple cushion the historic crown, and placed it on the head of the King, and then the other smaller coronet, specially made for each Queen Consort, upon the head of Queen Mary. I caught a glimpse of her face as the crown rested on her brow. Her expression was quiet and resolute, the eyes as steady as those of Queen Elizabeth might have been when she was crowned absolute monarch of the British Isles.

Then, a few moments later, that glance melted and turned to motherhood as the Prince of Wales, a gallant young figure in his regal robes, knelt before his father to swear his fealty as first gentleman of the land. Her lips curved to a slow smile, and I do not know which look remains clearer to me—the proud glance of the Queen, or the fond smile of the mother.

The regalia used by the Queen Consort deserves a few words of description. The Queen Consort shares in the honours of the King, save in the matter of the Orb and the Crown of England, which are reserved for the supreme monarch. For a Queen Consort, there is no State Crown, and for Queen Mary, as for Queen Alexandra, one was specially made. The design differs according to the taste of the Queen who is to wear it, but coloured gems are traditionally forbidden, diamonds being the only stones used.

Queen Alexandra chose a graceful diadem with eight semi-arches supporting a jewelled orb, and cross-pattée, the whole being set with 3,688 diamonds. Queen Mary selected a somewhat similar design, the diamonds used being so set—in platinum—that no metal-work was visible.

The "Orb" known as the "Queen Consort's Orb" was made for Mary II. It has a fillet outlined with pearls, and is set with rubies, sapphires, and emeralds.

The Queen's Sceptre with the Cross, which is borne in the right hand during the ceremony, is of gold, studded with diamonds, and is twenty-six inches in length. The Sceptre with the Dove, borne in the left hand, is a smaller replica of that carried by the King. The Dove, emblem of the Holy Ghost, has outstretched wings of white enamel, while the rest of the Sceptre, which is forty inches in length, is studded with rubies, sapphires, emeralds, and diamonds.

The Coronation Ring, which an old poet termed "the wedding ring of England," is to the majority

of people the most interesting part of the regalia, typifying as it does the union of the Sovereign with his people. King Edward used Queen Victoria's Coronation Ring, specially enlarged to fit his finger. This ring is set with a magnificent sapphire, inset with the Cross of St. George in rubies, and King George chose a ring of a similar design.

Queen Mary's Coronation Ring was modelled after that worn by Queen Adelaide, wife of William IV, and was set with a ruby surrounded by diamonds.

It is interesting to note the important part given a Queen Consort in the coronation ceremonies, as contrasted with the rôle played by a King Consort, for whom is provided no crown, no sceptre, and no ring, and on one occasion at least not even a throne by his wife's side.

Queen Mary, who has ever had a preference for being attended by those of her own sex, revived the custom of having young girls for her train-bearers at the Coronation, as did Queen Victoria, though the train of Queen Alexandra was borne by eight pages.

Some of the most nationally interesting visits carried out by Their Majesties during the coronation year were those paid to marine establishments, during a week's cruise on the Royal yacht. At Whale Island, Queen Mary had the pleasant surprise of being given a bunch of roses from a tree she had planted there twelve years previously. On this occasion King George planted another tree, and on being offered the traditional trowel, promptly waved it aside. "Give me a spade," he said; "do you think I cannot use one?" He shovelled with the

speed and skill of an experienced gardener and then, much to Queen Mary's amusement, called upon Princess Mary and Prince George, who were standing near, to help him fill in the hole.

During the War much was said concerning Queen Mary's readiness to talk with men with terrible facial disfigurements, but this is a kindness from which she has never allowed herself to shrink, though the effort must at times have been great. As Duchess of York she paid several visits to a woman near Sandringham, because she was told that owing to the nature of her malady people shrank from going to see her, and during the coronation year, when she and the King visited the London Hospital, and were told there was a leper there, she at once asked to see him, and talked to the unfortunate man for some time.

It was in the coronation year that Queen Mary suffered a deep loss, in the death of her brother Prince Francis of Teck. The Prince, who was a bachelor, had been a good friend to the hospitals, and shortly before he died had been instrumental in raising £20,000 for the Middlesex Hospital.

Of all the many ceremonies in which the Queen took part during that year, it is indeed doubtful if any interested her quite as much as the formal investiture of the Prince of Wales at Carnarvon Castle. Prince Edward was sixteen when King George formally created him Prince of Wales, and no one who saw the ceremony is likely to forget the central figure of the young Prince in his magnificent robes, traversing the battlements of the grand old castle, bravely trying to conceal his nervousness, firmly

determined to play his part to everyone's satisfaction, and to keep his boyish voice clear and true, as he took the oath of fealty and referred to the help of "his dear father and mother," who were watching him with rather anxious pride.

No biography of Queen Mary would be complete without some passing reference to a matter which, though she could and did proudly ignore it as Queen, must have given her great pain as a woman. I refer to the cruel and base rumours concerning a former marriage of King George. It was not, of course, a story to which persons of intelligence gave a moment's credence, but since human nature seems ever prone to believe the highly improbable evil, more readily than the more probable good, it was repeated again and again, and apparently received a fresh impetus at the time of the Coronation. So much so, in fact, that it was publicly referred to by the Dean of Norwich, Dr. Russell Wakefield, in a speech he made to a congregation of Friendly Society members at Norwich, in which he said :—

"We have now upon the Throne a man who, to my personal knowledge, is a man of intense self-sacrifice and high character. Against him one has heard two accusations brought, as I think, by that part of society which is no society at all; but these things percolate down, and it is just as well that when speaking before a mass of people one should give the lie to these two accusations.

"In the first place the King is sometimes accused of insobriety. You may take it from me, on undoubted authority, that this is a libel. As far as his close friends have noticed him, he has never

been intemperate throughout his life, but, on the contrary, is more a man who even from the point of view of health has to be abstemious, and who has no desire to be anything else. I want you, generous-hearted men, when you hear some light stupid talk with regard to this intemperance of our King, to say with absolute confidence, that there is not a more sober, temperate, quiet-living man in the country than King George.

"The other accusation is still more unworthy. It is, that prior to his marriage, he had what is called a secret, or morganatic marriage. That is absolutely, root and branch, an untruth. He has now undertaken the greatest responsibilities which any man can undertake, and I ask for him justice, fair dealing, confidence, loyalty, and love in his task."

But truth does not always prevail, and still the lying tongues wagged. Rumours of this kind are unfortunately very hard to pin down, or even to trace to their source, since it is always a case of "I know not what the truth may be, I tell the tale as 'twas told to me." At length, however, a definite charge was made, enabling action to be taken.

In 1910 a French Republican paper published in Paris and called *The Liberator* repeated this libel, not merely as a rumour, but as a definite accusation, complete with names and dates. The article stated that in 1890, three years before the Royal marriage, the King, then of course Prince George, married at Malta a daughter of Admiral Sir Michael Culme-Seymour, and that therefore in marrying Princess May he had contracted a bigamous union. The article was not printed merely as a spicy story, likely to

attract a certain class of readers, but as a direct attack on the British Throne, and in proof of this the Editor of *The Liberator* published a letter from "his friend Mylius of London," with reflections on "the so-called British Constitution," which allows a bigamous King to reign over the Empire.

The British Royal family, far from being in any way dismayed, welcomed that article, since it gave King George an opportunity of denying the cruel accusation and silencing for ever a base libel that had given so much pain to the Queen.

Mylius, whose nationality was never proved, was found to be living in a Bayswater boarding-house, and action was at once taken against him. The case, of course, proved a *cause célèbre*. Mylius demanded the calling of King George to give evidence, and His Majesty was anxious to avail himself publicly of the opportunity to refute the slander, but Ministers of the Crown advising him that it would be unconstitutional for him to appear, he was forced to content himself by writing a letter, from which Sir Rufus Isaacs quoted in the following terms :—

"I am authorised by His Majesty to state publicly that he was never married, except to the Queen, that he never went through any ceremony of marriage, except with the Queen, and, further, that he would have attended to give evidence, had he not received advice from the Law Officers of the Crown that it would be unconstitutional for him to do so."

Both Admiral Sir Culme-Seymour and his daughter, now Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Napier, gave evidence, however, and the latter not only denied the whole story *in toto*, but completely disposed of the allegation, by

stating that she had not even seen King George since she was a child of eight years old and he was a cadet on the *Britannia*, while her first visit to Malta was in November 1893, when the King and Queen had been married nearly five months. She had visited the island during the two succeeding years, but at no time had the King been there at the same time as herself.

Mylius, of course, could bring no evidence of even the flimsiest kind, and the jury had no hesitation in bringing him in guilty. In passing sentence of twelve months' imprisonment, the Lord Chief Justice made some scathing comments, not only on the prisoner, but on all those who delight in uttering slanders against honourable men and women in all walks of life, and most basely minister to the public taste for garbage.

It was doubtless a satisfaction to both King George and Queen Mary to see an infamous lie nailed to the mast, but so far as every fairminded citizen was concerned, there was really no need of such an action to vindicate the King's honour. His life has been lived openly before all men, and Their Majesties' home life has not only been free from the faintest breath of scandal, but has indeed been an example to the nation.

When first Queen Mary came to the Throne, the so-called Smart Set affected to sneer at her "middle-class" virtues, her open preference for home life, and her "respectability." It is precisely those qualities, desirable in any woman, but pre-eminently so in those set in high places, that have endeared the Queen to the hearts of her people. Queen Mary, in common with a few million other intelligent people,

admires "respectability"; to her it seems the very foundation of a nation; she was brought up in that belief, and sixty years of very wide and varied experience have in no way caused her to alter her opinion.

On the day that the verdict was given, Mr. Thomas Sopwith, one of the pioneer aviators, was making an interesting flight over London, and it was intimated to him that if he flew down to Windsor, Their Majesties would be pleased to see him. Accordingly he made the journey, and both the King and Queen chatted with him on the terrace. King George, who has always been keenly interested in mechanics, made a thorough inspection of Mr. Sopwith's machine, and was even able to point out some small defect to the aviator. Queen Mary also asked many questions, and invited Mr. Sopwith to have tea with her before his return flight.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE QUEEN'S WORK FOR CHARITY

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THE QUEEN'S WORK FOR CHARITY

Queen Mary's interest in the people and their welfare—Visits to East End—Welfare of sick and needy, and help for hospitals—Far-flung philanthropy—A splendid nurse—Help for Working Girls' Clubs—Practical aid for deserving causes.

TO give a detailed account of Queen Mary's public life, with all its social duties, its ceremonies, its Royal visits, and its public functions, would not only be tedious, but would even when recorded give little or no real impression of the woman who is the Queen Consort of Great Britain. Thus I propose to devote the remainder of this book to certain aspects of Her Majesty, as they have revealed themselves in various spheres of her activities, and no record would be in any way complete without some account of her work for charity. Her labours in the war years, and her later efforts on behalf of women and children's welfare movements, have to a large extent obscured her earlier philanthropic endeavours, but from the moment she came to the Throne she has been a sincere and practical friend to a multitude of good causes.

Soon after her accession the Bishop of London said of her :—

"I can tell you, there is no one who has more interest in all that makes for the welfare of the poor than our new Queen, no one who will bring such common sense to bear upon it, and no one who will do more for the general welfare of her people."

The Bishop then went on to describe various

occasions upon which he himself had conducted Her Majesty, incognito, on visits to the East End, where she had taken the deepest and most sincere interest in all he had to show her. These visits were not only made incognito, but were never in any way chronicled in the Press, being made solely from a sense of duty and a real anxiety to know, at first hand, something of the lives of her poorer subjects.

On one occasion the Bishop took her over a slum factory, and showed her the dinner room for the factory girls, none of whom had the least idea of their visitor's real identity. She chatted to many of them, and astonished them by her knowledge of the conditions under which they worked. One girl told the Queen she would be leaving the factory soon, as she was to be married. "I hope you will be very happy," smiled the Queen. "Oh, that'll be all right," answered the girl; "I know how to manage Bill."

A few days later the welfare worker of the factory handed the girl an envelope, containing a welcome contribution to the new home, and a sheet of notepaper, on which was written "Please accept the enclosed little present, and my best wishes for your happiness.—Mary."

Even then the truth did not dawn upon the bride-to-be, who "Mary" really was, and she beamingly told her companions that she had had a wedding present from the "lady who came the other day, and her name's Mary, same as mine."

Mention has already been made of the help the Queen, as Princess May, gave to the Duchess of

Speaight

A CHARMING PORTRAIT OF PRINCESS MARY

Their Majesties' only daughter, taken at the age of five.

Teck in her various works of charity, but I may perhaps just glance back once more, to recall an amusing little ceremony which took place each year at White Lodge when the Duchess, who took a great interest in the Royal Cambridge Asylum for the Widows of Soldiers, at Kingston, would present the venerable dames from the institution with a supply of fresh vegetables from the gardens, and in this distribution the young Princess May, shy and blushing, would have to take part.

The genial Duchess, who had a large heart, enjoyed the ceremony, and would often fill the old souls' aprons as well as their baskets.

"Now, May," she would say, with her expansive smile, "hand me two of those cauliflowers, and that bunch of onions. Yes, I know they smell strongly, but they are wonderful for flavouring, and do hurry, child, or I shall never be able to recommend you for a greengrocer's wife."

Both as Princess of Wales and as Queen, Her Majesty has been a good friend to the hospitals, and has paid many visits, often accompanied by a single lady-in-waiting, to various institutions in which she is interested. She has made every effort to assist in the campaign against consumption, and in later years against cancer. It was largely owing to the efforts of Queen Mary that the £5,000 necessary for the endowment of a special ward at the Richmond Free Hospital was raised, and besides her annual gifts of money to various hospitals, she frequently sends fruit, flowers, or even more practical gifts, to institutions where she has reason to believe they are needed.

Reference has been made to her powers of observation, and these are never seen to better advantage than in her visits to institutions for the help of the sick and needy. Not only does she notice how the sufferers are being cared for, but she is quick to observe any new methods employed, or fresh forms of treatment being tried.

On one occasion a doctor, who is aware of her interest in such matters, mentioned to Queen Mary a new form of shelter for consumptives that was being used at Crathie. Not long after, the Queen made a special journey to inspect the shelter, and was so pleased with what she saw that she ordered a similar shelter to be erected at Balmoral at her own expense, for the use of any employee on the estate who should need it. Dr. Hendry of Balmoral wrote to the medical officer, telling him of the result of the Queen's visit.

"The Queen has visited the patient at Crathie, for whom you recently erected a shelter. Her Majesty, who was much interested, thoroughly examined the shelter, and was very much pleased with it. The Queen wishes me to say, that when you have decided on the best method of heating for the colder winter nights, she will be obliged if you will supply, at Her Majesty's expense, a similar shelter for the use of the patients in connection with the Balmoral estates. The Queen wishes in this way to help you in your valuable work in the county."

"Your valuable work"; this has always been the keynote of the Queen's charitable efforts. She has no sympathy with those showy and foolish

forms of philanthropy, such as supplying editions-de-luxe of the classics to dustmen, in which society ladies occasionally indulge, but really practical philanthropic efforts which will ensure some lasting good are always sure of her support.

Not only hospitals and East End charities secure her patronage. She has been a constant contributor to that most deserving cause, the Distressed Gentlefolks' Aid Society, and the Holiday Homes for Governesses, while she was a firm supporter of home industries long before the slogan of "Buy British Goods" decorated a single hoarding. As has already been mentioned, Queen Mary's trousseau was made entirely by British labour, as was her Coronation Robe, and there has hardly been an exhibition of home industries in London, for the last twenty years, which she has not visited, and where she has not made extensive purchases. Many of the plainer articles of dress the Queen wears in her home life have been woven or knitted by cottagers in their own homes.

Had her lot lain along other lines, it is possible that Queen Mary, like her daughter, would have made an excellent nurse. She is admirable in the sick room, quiet, utterly devoid of that fussiness so trying to invalids, cheerful and competent. When in her younger days any of her children were ill, it was always "Mama" who had to nurse them, while of her services during King George's recent illness the Royal doctors cannot speak too highly.

As may easily be imagined, Queen Mary has no patience with the *malade imaginaire*, or the victims of mild nervous disorders, whose maladies are the

result of underwork and overfeeding, but for real suffering she has genuine pity and real solicitude, a solicitude that takes practical form. Once she noticed a housemaid with red eyes, and on asking the cause of her tears, was told that the girl's mother was about to undergo a serious operation at a London hospital. Her Majesty at once gave instructions that the girl was to have time to visit the hospital as often as rules permitted, and also instructed her secretary to telephone to the surgeon in charge of the case, asking him to report to the Palace after the operation had been performed.

Queen Mary has always had a fondness for detail, and she has for many years made it a rule to study personally all reports issued in connection with any charity in which she is particularly interested. Sometimes she asks for these to be specially prepared for her, and when she does this it is understood that she wants the truth. Once she asked Prebendary Carlile, head of the Church Army, to make out for her a special report on the conditions of the homeless poor, for whom of late so much has been done in providing, at least, nightly shelter, and this is the letter she wrote on receipt of the report.

"My sympathy goes out to all the poor and distressed people whom you are helping, and to the great work you are doing in comforting them in their distress. Give a message of encouragement from me to all your workers, and tell them that I sympathise with them in their arduous and difficult work. May God bless you, and them, and all the suffering men, women, and little children, who are looking to you for help."

Queen Mary has never had any patience with those who make a hobby of philanthropy, and in this connection she once remarked: "To take up charitable work as some ladies do, because they feel they would like some new pastime, and experience, is worse than giving charity indiscriminately. Charitable work is a very great and noble thing, when done in a whole-hearted manner."

At the Coronation, one of the most striking of Queen Mary's gifts was a cheque for £14,000 presented to her by the Marys of the nation, and at once Her Majesty decided to devote the whole amount to charity. The Committee appointed to deal with the gift, however, urged upon her that the contributors to the fund had hoped to make her a personal offering, and in deference to their wishes Queen Mary agreed to spend £1,500 of the sum upon some garter jewels, and on two portraits—one of the King and one of the Prince of Wales—painted by a famous artist. With the remaining £12,500 she established a holiday home for working girls, in connection with the London Girls' Club Union, of which she is Patroness.

Queen Mary is keenly interested in all the movements for Working Girls' Clubs, which have lately received considerable impetus. Her insight into social problems has given her a good idea of the evils that result from the lack of suitable means of recreation for young girls who, at work all day, have in their scanty leisure no alternative between roaming the streets, with all that that may imply, or sitting alone in dreary lodgings. She has shown herself always willing to become the patroness of all practical

schemes to provide places where girls may rest, play, dance, and above all take their friends. Quite recently she visited one such club, and not only gave cheerful pictures with which to decorate the walls of the dining hall, but sent a piano and a good supply of music, including a selection of the latest dance tunes.

As Lady Grand President of the League of Mercy, Queen Mary has given valuable support to that most worthy cause, and the annual garden parties given at Marlborough House to the League afford her genuine interest.

A whole chapter of this book could be filled with the names of the various charities with which Her Majesty has been connected, and to which she has given not only her patronage, but her very practical help. In later years her efforts in this direction are familiar to most of us, but earlier she did much to aid such institutions as the London Needlework Guild—of her own Needlework Guild we shall hear the history in a subsequent chapter—the Princess Mary Adelaide Home for the Training of Young Servants, the Princess Mary Memorial Home for Working Women, the Richmond Royal Hospital, and the Village Homes at Addlestone, where are housed the children of parents who are in prison.

Not everyone knows how much the latter institution owes to Her Majesty. When Princess of Wales she found these homes on the verge of closing down and, grieved to see the decay of what was an excellent institution, Her Majesty, who has a sound capacity for business, gave the matter her attention, enlisted sympathy and support, engaged a most com-

petent matron, and was responsible for the reorganisation of the whole concern.

National Baby Week is a comparatively recent innovation, but from its commencement Queen Mary was its most enthusiastic supporter, and in 1917 she opened the Exhibition at Caxton Hall, in connection with the campaign. Each year she demonstrates her sympathy with the movement, by gifts and the practical suggestions that we have come to expect from her.

This brief and inadequate record of Queen Mary's work for charity may be concluded with the recording of a characteristic fact. Many great ladies, and even certain Royal personages, will consent to their name being used in connection with a charity for which they have no intention of doing anything more. Not so Queen Mary. On no account will she become the patroness of any cause whatever unless she not only personally approves of its aims, but is prepared to give it practical support, and of her it may indeed be said—her word is her bond.

This latter quality was strikingly demonstrated in the matter of wearing ospreys, against which there was a most justifiable outcry some years ago. Leaders of society were asked to sign a pledge undertaking never again to wear an ornament obtained by gross cruelty to the unfortunate bird providing it. Many women signed at once—and went on wearing ospreys. Queen Mary quietly refused to sign. "I will not wear them," she said, and has kept her word.

Queen Mary occasionally quotes a favourite verse, taught her long ago by the Duchess of Teck,

and with it I cannot do better than close this chapter:

"If each man in his measure
Would do a brother's part
To cast a ray of sunlight
Into a brother's heart,
How changed would be our country!
How changed would be our poor!
And then might Merrie England
Deserve her name once more."

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE QUEEN AND THE WAR

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Reorganising to war-time conditions—Rationing at Buckingham Palace —Queen Mary's Needlework Guild—Commander-in-Chief of Women's Army Auxiliary Corps—Personal anxieties—The real woman revealed to her people.

THEIR Majesties' reign can by no stretch of the imagination be described as a peaceful one, and during her years as Queen Consort, Queen Mary has had to face more difficult circumstances, and more trying situations, than any English Royalty for the last century. She had not worn the crown for three years when there occurred the tragedy at Sarajevo, and before the reverberations of the assassin's shot had died away the nations were arming for Armageddon. The War over, there were the post-War problems to be faced, social chaos, the rapid growth of democracy, national evils, and dangers almost as threatening as the War itself had been.

To Queen Mary, as to thousands of her fellow women, the War brought a crushing burden of anxiety, a ceaseless strain—none the less wearing because she was not expected to show it—and an ever-growing burden of responsibility. But one thing those war years did for her, and that was to reveal her to her people as the years of peace had somehow failed to do.

The War brought to Queen Mary an opportunity for displaying her real gifts of organisation, which in the course of her peace-time duties found little scope.

As a matter of fact, she was better equipped for the chief of a live organisation than she was for being a mere figurehead, which was, prior to 1914, all that she had been required to appear. It was contrary to tradition that she should exercise her abilities in matters outside the conventional Royal circle, but from August 4th, 1914, demands were made upon her that she could and did meet, not only with her subjects' approval, but with their unqualified approval.

At first both Their Majesties hoped that it would be possible to turn Buckingham Palace itself into a military hospital, and experts were called in with a view to deciding if the plan were feasible. But the Palace was found to be so built that the alterations required would involve more labour than the erection of a new building. Thus the idea had to be regretfully abandoned. Later there was the hope that it might prove suitable for the American army headquarters, but here again the same objections ruled, and Queen Mary had to be content with organising her household on lines of the strictest economy, and in full obedience to the rationing schemes imposed upon her subjects. Even before rationing became compulsory, she had adopted it for the Royal table. One meat meal a day only was permitted, and there the meat was strictly limited; the plainest of puddings followed, and only war-bread was eaten. After she and the King had tried this diet for a few weeks, and found that they were sufficiently nourished by it, Queen Mary extended the system to the Palace staff, who did not find it welcome, but complaints were, of

course, impossible; employees could not well refuse to eat what not only their master and mistress, but their King and Queen had found palatable.

There was economy in fuel as well as food. Only one fire was allowed in the Royal apartments, and the supply of hot water was limited. One hot bath a week was all the Royal family allowed themselves; all other ablutions had to be performed in cold water.

All this, of course, was an excellent example to the nation, but it was not in comparatively small matters such as these that Queen Mary found full scope for her energies. It was in her work in public organisations.

Since her Needlework Guild was one of the first things with which she set herself to deal, we may start with a brief account of this organisation, which did such extremely valuable work throughout the whole four years of the War. During that time the work of the Guild attracted so much attention that many people are still under the impression that it was altogether a war-time organisation. This is by no means the case. The Guild was founded by Lady Wolverton, an intimate friend of the Duchess of Teck, in 1882, and is formed of groups of ladies, each having a president, five vice-presidents, and for each of the latter ten associates. Every member undertakes to provide annually at least two garments, suitable for distribution amongst those in need of them. In 1910 the Queen's group alone contributed over 15,000 garments, and in that year the total number of articles exhibited at the Imperial Institute was 54,010; of these King George contributed a thousand flannel garments, the Prince of Wales

many pairs of socks, and Prince George and Prince Henry comforters they had made themselves.

I may mention here that all Queen Mary's sons were taught to knit, and to knit properly, bad work having to be undone and remade. Rumour tells us that the Prince of Wales still occasionally displays his skill in that direction; it is possible he has not forgotten how to use the needles, since the parcel that came to the Guild from "David" in those far-off days was always the most neatly and tastefully done.

In 1910 Queen Mary followed her own mother's example, in making Princess Mary vice-president of a group of girls much about her own age, and this group was responsible for 700 garments.

As far back as 1887, Queen Mary was working energetically for the Guild, and in a letter the Duchess of Teck tells how the work occupied two months in the sorting alone.

"May," she wrote, "knelt so long just at first over the huge parcels and bundles, that she very nearly gave herself housemaid's knee. Indeed, she worked so energetically that she nearly knocked herself up. May contributed 461 articles. Very good for her first year as President."

As Duchess of York and Princess of Wales her zeal was unabated, and when she was asked how she could find time to make so many garments each year, she replied: "I have always one of the little petticoats on hand in each of the sitting rooms, and I take it up whenever I have a few minutes to spare; then, in the evenings, my husband reads to me, and I work and get through a good deal."

Thus it will be seen that when war broke out, and the work of the Guild became of national importance, Queen Mary was fully capable of extending its sphere of usefulness. Almost the first thing she did was to organise a Central Committee, which grew out of the Needlework Guild, and was to provide mufflers, socks, bandages, and similar necessities for the Fighting Forces, all produced by voluntary labour. The committee was willing, enthusiastic, and industrious, but from its labours there arose two problems, which Queen Mary was called upon to help to solve. The first trouble arose out of the fact that the members of the Guild devoted a large proportion of their time to making wholly useless and sometimes even ridiculous articles. Quite early in the history of the Committee, Queen Mary paid a surprise visit to one of the clearing houses for the work of the Guild, and as was her wont made a thorough—too thorough for the taste of the officials—examination of the work. Presently she was seen staring down at a bundle she had opened. "What are these?" she demanded. And "these" proved to be a tasteful array of pyjama cases, beautifully embroidered with patriotic emblems.

"If we are making things like these," announced the Queen, "we are wasting our time. It is time the Committee was more carefully organised."

She did not merely express an opinion, but she saw to it that an improvement was made. She called a committee at Buckingham Palace, and sat on it herself, as an ordinary member, who made suggestions, just as any other member might have done. Within a month the committee were making only those articles which would be of real use, either

to the troops or to those of their dependants who might be in need of them.

A more serious problem arose from the complaint of many women, who earned their livelihood with their needle, that so much voluntary labour was depriving them of their living. It was a problem that required rather delicate handling. The response to the Queen's appeal had been overwhelming, and for the voluntary workers there could be nothing but praise; but thousands of women were not in a position to make their labour voluntary, and were suffering through the patriotic zeal of others. Mary Macarthur came up to London to see what could be done about it, and after trying in vain to interest several high officials in her plan, decided to approach the Queen in person. She was given a sympathetic and intelligent hearing. "This is wrong, and wholly unnecessary," said the Queen, and promised she would do what she could to remedy the matter. At once she set about keeping her word; she pulled strings accessible only to a Royal hand. Enquiries were made, Cabinet Ministers approached, and in a comparatively short space of time the organisation saw to it that there was no overlapping between the legitimate work of the women who earned their living by sewing and those who were working from motives of patriotism.

It was, on the face of it, a perfectly simple reform to accomplish, and one that required merely the exercise of a little common sense. But nothing was done until the Queen took the matter in hand. It was her personal interest that solved the problem, and it is the personal contact into which the War

Downey

KING GEORGE AND QUEEN MARY WITH THE PRINCE OF WALES, DUKE OF YORK, DUKE OF GLOUCESTER, PRINCE GEORGE, PRINCE JOHN, AND PRINCESS MARY, TAKEN AT BALMORAL CASTLE

brought her with women labour leaders that has firmly established her popularity with the labour movement of the present day.

As time passed the organisation ran on oiled wheels, and though the Queen took, and still takes, an active interest in its workings, there were no problems calling for her attention.

But there were other directions in which her help was needed, and sought. There was the famous Women's Army Auxiliary Corps—"the Waacs"—a body which it must be confessed did not at first enjoy the fine reputation it earned before its disbanding. The rumours were doubtless exaggerated, like all other rumours of that period, but it is certain that many of the girls did look upon their uniforms as giving them not only liberty but licence.

It was when the whole organisation was under the deepest cloud that Queen Mary was asked to become Commander-in-Chief. Discipline had by then been enforced, and the Waacs were a well-conducted body of young women, anxious to do their bit for their country, but the stories of the earlier days persisted, to the annoyance and humiliation of the Corps. The Queen's connection with the force had an overwhelming effect. "Above all else," says Dame Leach, "the Queen helped us to live down the slanders of the past."

But Queen Mary did not stop at merely lending her name to the Corps. She took a practical interest in it, as she has in every other organisation with which she has in any way been connected. Once or twice a week she would go down to the London Headquarters, and see for herself that all was going

smoothly. Frequently she would look through the newspapers and find that they were not doing justice to the work of the Corps, or that there were rumours of some scandal long since buried. The editor would receive a polite rebuke from the Palace, and a request that in future only facts should appear. Occasionally there would be a casualty amongst the ranks of the girls in France, and then whenever possible Queen Mary would write the letter of condolence to the relatives in person, and in many other ways she kept in constant touch with the work of the Corps.

It was much the same with the V.A.D.'s and a dozen other war-time organisations. If any of their members were present at any gathering she attended, she made a point of speaking to them, of asking questions about their work, and of displaying that personal interest which means so much more than mere formal patronage.

This personal contact is a characteristic of the Queen, which many officials in various spheres have found decidedly trying. Reports have been prepared, carefully compiled, and still more carefully edited; statistics have been sent with the report, and then with a few pointed questions to one of the workers involved, the Queen has found out something she wanted to know, and something those in authority were by no means anxious for her to discover!

In the next chapter I shall touch upon some further aspects of Queen Mary's work during those fateful four years. She was not, of course, without personal anxieties, apart from those natural to her position. The Prince of Wales was with the troops, and had

more than one narrow escape, of which the public never heard. Intimate friends were engaged in the struggle, the issues of which were often dim and confused, and the demands made upon her were daily increasing; yet I think we may safely assume that despite the anxieties of the time, she found a certain satisfaction in being for once allowed to give her energies full play. She is a naturally capable and energetic woman, and she was fully equal to the demands made upon her. Her people saw her revealed, not merely as a national figurehead, useful and ornamental to be seen in State ceremonies, regally gowned, conventionally gracious, but as a woman who could do things, who had a real grip upon realities, and who possessed, or would set about acquiring, not a surface but an inside knowledge of the vital problems of the time, and the revelation increased her popularity a hundredfold.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

WAR WORK

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The hospitals—Stories of visits to the "Tommies"—Munition factories—Founding of Roehampton Hospital—Queen Mary's war-time mail-bag—Visit to France in 1917—The Queen's "Message to the Women of the Empire."

A FULL record of the work Queen Mary did throughout the war period would fill several volumes, but in this brief biography I propose to touch only upon its outstanding features.

Her Majesty was an indefatigable visitor to military hospitals all over the country; usually she was attended only by one lady-in-waiting, sometimes she was accompanied by the King, but in either case her visits were seldom "official"—not the visits of a Queen doing her conventional duty, but those of a woman anxious to do what was possible in cheering the sufferers.

On one occasion Their Majesties telephoned to a certain hospital announcing their intention of visiting it, and the somewhat agitated secretary begged them to postpone their visit, as "we are so busy, that there is something of a muddle." "That is why we are coming," was the Royal reply. "We wish to see you just as you are." And the visit was duly paid.

As far as was humanly possible, Queen Mary made it a rule to speak to every man in the hospitals she visited, and these bedside chats were certainly amongst the most successful "interviews" she has ever given, for unlike so many well-meaning visitors of that time, she did not ask foolish questions or

assume that super-patriotic air that irritated so many thousands of the boys in blue. She enquired after their wounds, stayed for a little simple, cheery conversation, and passed on to the next bed. She saw many terrible sights, for she did not shrink from the most ghastly facial disfigurements. She was told, in the simple words of the men themselves, incidents that could not be set down in cold print, and she learned something of the real aspect of war, as distinct from the death-or-glory pictures of the Press.

It was the men who had been badly gassed who seemed to trouble her most, as they did all those who saw their agonies, and she begged the chiefs of the hospitals to let her know of any fresh discovery that had been made in the methods of treatment. To anyone who has the remotest knowledge of the unbreakable courage and unconquerable spirit of the Tommies, it will be readily understood that not all those bedside encounters were devoid of a smile.

The staff of a certain hospital, or what now remain of the staff, still tell with chuckles the story of the over-zealous Sister and the Cockney Tommy, whose deed of valour made him certain of being singled out in the ward when the Queen arrived. The lad was gallant of heart, but uncouth of speech, and given to utterances which it was felt would certainly shock the Royal ears: thus it was that the matron set about priming him with the answers he should give to the questions she felt sure the Queen would ask. Willing to oblige, the lad memorised it all, and when Queen Mary came, was, as he thought, quite ready for her, but somehow it did not go as he

expected. The Queen talked as any kindly woman might have done, but the formal questions he had expected did not come, and he grew increasingly nervous, so nervous in fact that at last the Royal visitor leaned over the bed and asked him if he were too tired to talk. "No, Your Majesty, it ain't that," he blurted out, "but if you'll ask the matron she'll tell you what to say!"

Then there was the boy who had enlisted at sixteen, and been wounded on his first day in the trenches. "You were too young to go," said the Queen when she saw him. "Well, Your Majesty, I wanted to have a whack at the Germans," replied the lad. The Queen's eyes twinkled, round the firm mouth the rare smile came. "They seem to have had the first whack," she said gravely as she passed on.

An Irishman's gallantry seldom deserts him, and even the loss of a leg did not quench it in an elderly Irishman who, taking ten years off his age, had been sent to the Front and wounded in his first encounter.

"I am sorry you were wounded so quickly," said the Queen. "Well, Your Majesty, I was anxious to get here to have the honour of spakin' to ye," came the immediate reply.

After the hospitals, there were the munition factories to visit. Here the Queen's inspection was thorough, and she even went into the "yellow" room, and chatted with the girls who were so courageously doing their bit.

In 1915 Her Majesty was largely responsible for the starting of Queen Mary's Roehampton Hospital for men who had lost limbs in the War, and who were in need of artificial appliances, and to this hospital

the Queen sent £7,000 from the sum subscribed as a gift to Their Majesties on the occasion of their Silver Wedding.

She was also instrumental in obtaining large sums of money for Queen Mary's Hospital at Sidcup, the hospital designed for the treatment of men with facial injuries, where so many miracles in plastic surgery were performed. Her visits to this hospital were frequent, and must have been amongst the most painful experiences of that most painful time.

Queen Mary is Colonel-in-Chief of the 18th Royal Hussars. This regiment, known as "Queen Mary's Own," was one of the first to be sent to France on the outbreak of the War, and by her own wish Queen Mary went to Tidworth Barracks to bid the officers and men "God speed," while throughout the War the exploits of the regiment were sent to her in full detail.

There was hardly an institution she visited, during those years, where Queen Mary did not ask to see the store cupboards, and always she was quick to notice any lack of what she considered necessary supplies. She could not always set right the deficiency —the cupboards of Buckingham Palace were none too well stocked—but in the case of hospitals, if it were at all possible for Royal influence to procure anything in the way of added luxuries, then that influence was at once exerted, and often from the scanty stores of the Palace itself would come welcome gifts, with a personal note from the Queen, explaining the reason why they were sent.

All Royal personages receive a very great many letters, Kings and Queens most of all, though at the

present time the mail-bags of the Prince of Wales are the largest of any European Royalty; but during the War Queen Mary's letters often required the whole-time service of a post-office van. It would be absurd to pretend that Queen Mary opened and read all of these letters in person; this she could not have accomplished, even had she done nothing else, but the secretaries who dealt with her correspondence during this period had strict instructions that no letters but the trivial, the begging—of the professional kind—or the impertinent, were to be put aside. All cases of genuine distress must be brought at once to her attention; even an honest criticism of any public matter must be shown to her, lest it shed some fresh light on the situation.

To canteens and communal kitchens she was a frequent visitor, and on more than one occasion she actually took her place behind the counter and served "penn'orths" of pudding, and basins of soup, to purchasers. But even here her interest was severely practical. How were the puddings mixed, what did it cost to make the soup, and how long did the dinners take to prepare? What labour-saving devices were in use, and had they proved of really practical service?

As may be imagined, when it was known that the Queen or Princess Mary, who often accompanied her mother on such visits, was to help in any communal kitchen or canteen, there was a rush by the women of the neighbourhood to be served by Her Majesty, and their opinions of the Royal dispenser of soup and pudding were sometimes both piquant and amusing. One portly dame who had arrived

with an extra large basin was somewhat disappointed. "Yes," she told a crony, "Queen Mary served me all right, and very pleasant she was about it—only she didn't ferget to take my penny."

To those who knew anything of Her Majesty's thoroughness, it came as no surprise to learn that she had spent nearly a fortnight in France, visiting hospitals, army bases, and the many headquarters of the women's legions. The visit, which was kept a profound secret, took place in July 1917, and the Queen was accompanied only by Lady Airlie. Her Majesty remained in France for ten days, but into that time she contrived to crowd a very great amount. From the château in Montreuil, which she made her headquarters, she visited hospital after hospital, passed through battlefields, saw something of the methods used in camouflage, and learned much of the daily lives of the women who in one way or another were serving their country "over there."

By this time the heroic virtues of the soldiers had come to be taken for granted; their courage, their patience, and their endurance occasioned admiration, but no more surprise. The women's legions, too, had long since settled down to the fine work and steady loyalty that made their presence at the Front so valuable, but Queen Mary was much impressed by the stark simplicity of their lives, the dangerous positions they often occupied—and refused to leave—and by the amount of hard, dirty, and exhausting work they contrived to get through. While no one has ever accused Queen Mary of being a feminist, there is no doubt the War highly increased her admiration for her own sex, and no one could question

the sincerity of the tribute she paid them, when in 1918 she wrote :—

"They have risen to the great opportunity, and have proved their great courage, steadfastness, and ability. My heart is full of gratitude and admiration for what I have seen. A new era is dawning upon the world, bringing with it many difficulties, fresh responsibilities, and serious problems to be faced.

"To-day, more than ever, the Empire needs her daughters, for in the larger world of public and industrial work, women are taking a more important place.

"As we have been united in our work, whether of head or hands, in a real sisterhood of suffering and service, let us go on working together, with the same unity of purpose, for the settlement and reconstruction of our country."

On the tenth anniversary of Armistice Day, the Queen issued another message to the women of the Empire. She had then had a long experience of the problems of peace, many of them almost as harassing as the problems of war. She had visited the war graves and the war areas, mute witnesses to the greatest crime in history, and she had seen much of the suffering that by no means ended with the firing of the guns, suffering borne by women as well as by men, and her message came from her heart.

"All who have visited the War cemeteries as I have must have been moved to the heart as I was by their solemn beauty, and by the reverent care with which they are tended. We know, too, that the War Graves Commission surrounds them with the same care wherever they may be.

"In these cemeteries rest many of the devoted

and fearless women who gave their lives while serving as Army, Volunteer, and Territorial Nurses; in the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps, and in my own—Queen Mary's Corps.

"Yet those who fell are not alone in having sacrificed all that life has to offer. Every man of our million dead may have been dearer than anything on earth to some one woman, and in every part of the Empire to-day are women who go on living, with wounds in their hearts that time cannot heal.

"I wish that my voice could reach each one of them with a word of loving sympathy."

If the War revealed her people to the Queen, how much more did it reveal the Queen to her people. They discovered, what her intimates had always known, that behind that reserved exterior was real, though never effusive, kindliness, a deep, a very deep, desire to do her duty in her high position, and a real wish to earn her subjects' affection. The latter ambition has surely been fulfilled: the most fervent socialists have been known to admit that "she does her bit," and to appreciate the fact that Royal robes, a crown, and several Royal residences do not always stand for a life of self-indulgent luxury, and that Queen Mary herself would often be grateful for as much real leisure, as much time to herself, as some of her severest critics.

All the world is aware that during the War the Royal family changed their name from Guelph to Windsor, but not all the world is aware that Queen Mary was largely responsible for the choice. From her earliest girlhood, when she used to stay there as the guest of Queen Victoria, Windsor has been

her favourite residence, and she knows its history better than any other member of the Royal family. Indeed, so well does she know it, that on one occasion when by chance she heard a guide lecturing to a party of sightseers concerning some happening in the Castle two hundred years ago, she was able to detect two errors in his narrative, and to set them right in a friendly little note.

She once told a friend that she thought "Mary Windsor" one of the nicest names it was possible to bear, and it certainly suits her admirably. Its simplicity, its peculiarly British quality, even its severity, indicate the innate characteristics of our Queen, characteristics which, once thoroughly understood, ensure our affectionate esteem.

During recent years there have been many fulsome references to Queen Mary's "tact" in seeking out the wives of labour leaders, and holding them in converse, but as a matter of cold fact this is not Royal tact, or even expediency, but the Queen's desire to understand just what Labour really thinks and hopes for. She probably knows as much about the theories of socialism as does Mr. Ramsay MacDonald himself, and though a Queen can hardly be expected to agree with democracy, she certainly does understand its point of view. In a recent book Mr. Lansbury regretfully confessed to having once been wilfully discourteous to the Prince of Wales, who, he says, was no doubt as interested in the problem of unemployment as he was himself. Labour has learnt to adopt a similar attitude towards Queen Mary. She may not be able to mend matters, but—she is as interested as they are.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

QUEEN MARY'S HOBBIES

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Appreciation of pictures—An expert needlewoman—Keen interest in gardens—The Queen's taste in reading—Unique collection of fans—Shrewd judge of antiques and values—Patron of British lace-making industry.

WHEN treating of Royal personages, it is often the custom to endow them not only with all the virtues, but with all the arts as well, to depict them as bibliophiles, art connoisseurs, patrons of music, and of the sciences. Queen Mary would be the first to repudiate such claims to artistic omniscience, but it is a fact that she has a genuine interest in art, a really good knowledge of pictures, and a working idea of the literature of other countries besides her own.

Of music she is fond, and has of course the understanding of it that her education has given her, but she is not a musician; it is not her favourite art. As a whole the Royal family is not musical, though Princess Mary both plays and sings well above the amateur standard.

Queen Mary's girlhood stay in Italy developed in her the taste for pictures she has always possessed, and from then until the present day she has really enjoyed a visit to an art gallery. There is no exhibition of pictures of any importance that she does not see, while the picture galleries of the various Royal residences are an unfailing source of pleasure to her. These collections contain many notable examples of the painter's skill, and in many instances Queen Mary has re-arranged them, bringing the finer

pictures into greater prominence, and relegating those of less importance to some dimly lit corridor or little frequented salon.

As has already been mentioned, in her younger days Queen Mary spent many pleasant hours with her sketch-book, but this is a recreation she has practically given up. It is not a gift she seems to have bequeathed to any of her children, though the Prince of Wales has a decided turn for caricature, and will often bring home his dance programme, his dinner menu, or the programme of some public affair he has attended, covered with wicked little sketches of the over-pompous, or the over-effusive, with whom he has come into contact.

All her life Queen Mary has plied her needle with great industry, but this seems to be more in the nature of work than of recreation. Certainly she has enjoyed making "woollies" for her grandchildren, for her grandsons before they attained the dignity of knickerbockers, and later for little Princess Elizabeth, for whom she still makes many charming garments.

Of the same materials, and to exactly the same pattern, the Queen makes little garments which, together with gay cot covers, she presents to various hospitals and maternity homes at Christmas. But all this needlework, together with that which she does for her Needlework Guild, can hardly be called a hobby. She finds more recreation in embroidery. Her work here is perfect of its kind, and varies from the more simpler forms to gros-point tapestry, which is sometimes prepared for her by the workers of the Royal School of Art Needlework.

Her Majesty is very fond of gardens, and finds a great deal of genuine pleasure in superintending the laying out and planting of certain borders in the Royal gardens. The gardens at Windsor are too public to interest her in the same degree as do those at Sandringham, where she is particularly attached to the small enclosure in the woods, originally the idea of Queen Alexandra, but which Queen Mary has most carefully cultivated, and from which each year she sends large quantities of the semi-wild flowers that bloom there in such profusion. In the grounds of Buckingham Palace too there is a sequestered nook where the Queen often sits, and where, as far as the London climate permits, her favourite flowers are grown.

Those pleasing little pen-pictures of Queen Mary wearing gardening gloves, and armed with fork, trowel, and even spade, which are occasionally given us, may be taken as largely apocryphal. Certainly as Princess May, and perhaps as the Duchess of York, she may have done a little gardening, and to-day, being above all things a practical and energetic woman, if she should see a weed—which she does not expect to see—in her favourite flower-beds, she will root it up, or if a flower has slipped from its support she finds it another straight away, but at the present time she has neither the leisure nor the inclination for garden work.

In flowers, as in clothes, her tastes incline to delicate blues and purples; she is particularly fond of delphiniums and lupins, and where they will thrive, lavender bushes are always planted. Her Majesty pays many private visits to the magnificent gardens

at Hampton Court, where the Dutch garden specially attracts her, and when she wishes to send flowers to any charitable institutions, and the Royal gardens cannot quite cope with the demand, it is to Hampton Court she sends for the supply.

The Queen's Rest Room at the Garden Club at Wembley was specially decorated with a view to carrying out Queen Mary's favourite garden schemes. The walls were painted cream, and lupins, delphiniums, and phlox seemed to be climbing from the skirting boards up the walls to which they had been appliquéd. The Queen so appreciated the effect that she had a room decorated in a similar manner at Buckingham Palace, making it one of the most attractive rooms in that somewhat gloomy building.

Queen Mary does not share King George's enthusiasm for philately. His Majesty has one of the two finest stamp collections in the world, but though Queen Mary may occasionally help him to sort his stamps, and has perforce learned quite a lot concerning their value, the hobby does not really attract her, and she finds more genuine interest in the King's collection of snapshots, most of them contributed by members of the Royal family, embracing almost every subject, and taken in almost every part of the globe.

As far as her multifarious duties permit, Queen Mary still devotes a certain portion of her leisure to reading, but the greater number of her books are selected more from a sense of duty than from pleasure; books on social problems, on new scientific discoveries, on new political theories, she does her best to read. When she does choose a

book for her own private interest, it is usually one of travel or biography. Needless to state, she has not the slightest toleration of the various *chroniques scandaleuses*, which of late have appeared in such surprising and unedifying numbers. She enjoys a good novel, preferably with a plot, but unlike her sons, and even the Duchess of York, has no liking for "thrillers" of any description, nor has she any interest in the "modern" novel, with the sex element well in evidence. She is a keen student of the newspapers, and if on any occasion she cannot read them as thoroughly as she thinks necessary, her secretary has instructions to mark any matter likely to be of special interest, and keep it for an hour of leisure.

But of her various hobbies there is none Queen Mary finds so really absorbing as the collecting of antiques, and this is a passion she indulges wherever she goes, often with the happiest results. Naturally the Royal residences contain many valuable and even unique treasures of this description, but Queen Mary has formed various most interesting collections of her own, in making which she has been animated not by a desire to acquire only what is costly, or even unique, but what is really attractive, charming to the eye and of historical interest.

Her Majesty takes very great interest in her collection of fans, the nucleus of which was formed by her mother the Duchess of Teck. This includes some very beautiful specimens, many of which Queen Mary has herself purchased, though one or two have been presentations, and one at least was bequeathed to her. This latter was given by William IV to

the Duchess of Cambridge, who left it to her granddaughter when she was Princess May. The leaf represents Rinaldo in the garden of Armida, most exquisitely painted, while the sticks of the fan are set with precious stones. Another specimen, also bequeathed by the Duchess of Cambridge, bears a miniature portrait of the second son of George III in uniform, and wearing the Order of the Garter. There is also an interesting memento in the form of a paper fan, designed as a souvenir of the invasion of the United Kingdom by Charles Stuart in 1745.

Perhaps the finest of the presentation fans is that given to Her Majesty by Mr. Oscar Berry, Master of the Worshipful Company of Fan Makers, and Sir Homewood Crawford, the Past Master. This fan, worked in Honiton lace, was made from a design by Mr. Wooliscroft Rhead, Honorary Freeman of the Company, and displays the Queen's cipher, surmounted by a crown, and surrounded by the Garter, while on either side are the arms of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, with the flowers that form those countries' national emblems. The frame is of tortoiseshell, ornamented with diamonds, and the whole is of British manufacture throughout.

When during the War the *Times* opened a fund for the wounded, Her Majesty gave a fan to be auctioned for the cause. This was of tortoiseshell, with her monogram in diamonds, and at its first sale fetched 190 guineas, but the lady who bought it immediately put it up again, and this time it realised 240 guineas.

Tortoiseshell has a great attraction for the Queen, who possesses some very fine examples. She also collects piqué tortoiseshell. Perhaps I should explain that tortoiseshell becomes piqué when it is softened in hot water, and while in that state, designs in gold and silver can be worked in it. These designs show finely when once the shell hardens again. This is, of course, an art peculiar to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Brighton is a happy hunting ground for collectors of piqué, and it is in this town that Queen Mary has picked up some of her most delightful specimens.

Queen Mary makes it a rule to visit the antique shops in the neighbourhood of any place where she may be staying. When she was at Goldsborough, she and Princess Mary visited many Yorkshire towns, hunting for fine specimens, and in the Isle of Wight there is hardly an antique shop Her Majesty does not know well.

Always her visits are quite unheralded, and unless the shopkeeper recognises her, it is quite possible for this quiet, dignified-looking lady to inspect his wares, make her purchases, and walk out without his being aware that he has served the Queen of England.

Her Majesty is an excellent shopper. She always knows just what she wants, and, it may be added, just what she ought to pay for it. No Queen has shopped as freely as does she. Queen Victoria of course always had the goods sent to Buckingham Palace for the Royal inspection : not so Queen Mary. She visits shops anywhere and everywhere, if she hears they have goods likely to interest her, and often,

attended only by an equerry or a lady-in-waiting, will wander about pricing the goods and asking questions like any other woman. She has a distinct preference for all goods to be marked in plain figures, and as pronounced a dislike of being over-charged for anything as the rest of her sex. Once she visited for the first time an antique shop in London, and at first the assistant did not recognise her. "How much is this needlework picture?" asked Her Majesty. "Twenty-five guineas, Madam," came the answer. A few moments later the Queen's companion chanced to address her as "Your Majesty," and the assistant realised her identity. When next she paused before the picture its price had risen to thirty guineas. The Queen did not make a purchase, and that particular shopkeeper is still lacking the Royal Arms over his shop door.

At Buckingham Palace Queen Mary has a very attractive collection of trifles in mother o' pearl. Many of these she has picked up in Windsor and Harrogate, and she often chooses articles of this description as gifts to friends.

When Princess Mary became engaged to Viscount Lascelles, Queen Mary was anxious to visit the wonderful art treasures contained in Chesterfield House, and Lord Lascelles spent many hours with his future mother-in-law, examining the wonderful china, pictures, and priceless antiques his uncle has amassed in his town mansion.

By this time, as may be easily imagined, Queen Mary has acquired a really excellent knowledge of antiques of every description, and in this, as in most matters, it is extremely difficult to impose upon her by any

fake, however clever it may be. On more than one occasion she has been able to put an antique dealer right on some small point connected with his goods, or even to detect in the Royal collections a reproduction, or a repair, wholly hidden from less discerning eyes.

Queen Mary takes an intelligent interest in miniatures, and it was her study of these that gave her an idea for a unique bracelet, which has now become one of her favourite ornaments. This bracelet is made in the form of a heavy gold band, into which is inset three tiny but singularly perfect miniatures of Her Majesty's three grandchildren, Princess Elizabeth, Master George and Master Gerald Lascelles. There is space for several other miniatures, spaces the Queen much hopes will be duly filled within the next few years.

It is easy to understand what pleasure Queen Mary derives from one particular offering that is made each year to the King. This is tribute from the Ruler of Kashmir, and consists of six most exquisitely worked shawls, which King George always hands over to the Queen to do with as she pleases. Many are the uses to which Her Majesty puts these most lovely wraps. Occasionally she gives one as a gift, usually on a birthday, either to members of the Royal family, or to her few intimate friends; sometimes she uses them in some scheme of decoration in her own salons, and it was one of the finest of these shawls that was used as a wrap for the tiny Princess Elizabeth during the first weeks of her life.

Queen Mary is a really excellent judge of lace, and has some exquisite specimens of the art of all countries,

while throughout the whole of her reign, and even before she came to the Throne, she has done her utmost to promote the British lace-making industry, and from time to time she sends special orders to Nottingham and kindred centres.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

QUEEN MARY AS MOTHER

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Bond of mutual affection between Queen and Princess Mary—A mother's influence on her children—Two love matches—The Duchess of York—Popularity of the Prince of Wales—Queen's interest in her children's travels and duties.

THROUGHOUT the whole of their lives Queen Mary has possessed great influence over her children, and she has had a great deal to do with their careers, at each stage of their development. It is of course only natural that this influence should have been strongest in the case of her only daughter Princess Mary. Mother and daughter are deeply attached one to another, and before her marriage Queen Mary supervised her daughter's life to a degree unknown to many less exalted mothers. In her choice of friends, of clothes, of amusements, she was guided by her mother, and it was a very fortunate thing that the Queen fully approved of her daughter's choice of a husband.

To find a suitable husband for a Royal princess is by no means the simple task it would at first sight appear. Certain qualifications are absolutely necessary, certain others highly desirable, and in the case of Princess Mary, matters were made more difficult by the fact that, marrying so soon after the War, popular sentiment and indeed national policy was against her marrying a foreign Prince, as in peace time she might quite conceivably have done. It was required that her husband should be of irreproachable reputation, no scandal must in any way

be attached to his name, he must be of old family, and he must be wealthy, for taking their position into consideration the Royal family is not rich.

Thus, when it was announced that Princess Mary was to marry Lord Lascelles, there was great satisfaction throughout the British Empire, its citizens seeing in the alliance a most satisfactory union between democracy and a Princess of the Blood Royal. Also it was a genuine love match, and no one rejoiced more sincerely than Queen Mary.

Not less felicitous was the marriage of the Duke of York. Most certainly he chose his own wife, but it would be foolish to ignore his mother's influence in the matter. Even when her children are grown men and women, there are many ways in which, unknown to them, a mother can exert her influence, and one of these ways is in the direction of the type of friends by whom they shall be surrounded. This was an influence Queen Mary exerted to the full, and it was under this influence that the Duke of York was likely to be attracted to a girl of the admirable character of Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon. Of his own free will the Duke of York fell in love with her, and proposed not once, but several times, before he was accepted. It was, indeed, Queen Mary who heartened him for his final and successful proposal. "Elizabeth must make up her mind," she told him, "and I have seen a great deal of the truth of the old saying 'Faint heart ne'er won fair lady.' Go to her, ask her once more, but give her to understand that this time you will take her answer as final, whatever it may be."

He went to her, and came away an engaged man.

Downey

HER MAJESTY QUEEN MARY WITH THREE OF HER SONS

H.R.H. the Duke of York. H.R.H. Prince George. H.R.H. the Duke of Gloucester.

The marriage took place with the full approval of the Royal family. It was one of those fortunate coincidences where love and national policy went hand in hand. Had the Duke fallen in love with some one unsuitable, he would never have sacrificed his sense of duty to the Crown by marrying her, and he may indeed consider himself as fortunate that he did not give his heart where he could not give his hand. Writing of the engagement to a friend, the Queen made a characteristic comment. "Thank God," she wrote, "Elizabeth is not one of these modern girls!"

When first the Duchess of York married she was, like every other daughter-in-law, a little mistrustful of the influence the Queen had over her husband. But this feeling was soon dispelled by the Queen herself, who, as a mother-in-law, believes in being as unobtrusive as possible, and who has made it an invariable rule never to give even the smallest piece of advice, unless she is specially asked for it. This is, no doubt, the reason why her advice is considered valuable.

When the Duchess was selecting her new house in Piccadilly, she and the Duke had discussed certain points without coming to a decision. "I'd rather have your mother's opinion before we settle definitely," said the Duchess. "She always seems to know more about everything than I do."

"Yes, that's a little way of Mother's," answered the Duke.

It was the Queen who gave the casting vote in the matter, just as it was she who saw to the furnishing of that bright airy room on the third floor, which

became Princess Elizabeth's nursery, and herself recommended the gleaming walls, with all the magic figures of fairyland walking in procession across them.

The Queen's influence over the Prince of Wales has not yet been great enough to persuade him to take a wife. Her Majesty, in common with most of us, would like to see him a married man, with the prospect of a direct heir to the Throne, but so far her efforts in this direction have proved in vain. As a matter of fact, even if the Prince should decide to remain single, it will by no means be the national calamity it is sometimes proclaimed. A bachelor king is not unknown to history. The Prince would have both his sister and his sister-in-law to act as wholly adequate hostesses in all State functions, while as for an heir, he has two bachelor brothers who are by no means woman haters.

On every other subject but marriage, the Prince of Wales has implicit faith in his mother's judgment, and he consults her concerning most of his undertakings. Though one cannot grudge high praise to the tutors and certain members of the staff of the Prince of Wales in training him for his duties, we must allow his mother a fair share of credit. It may be that Queen Mary's heart was particularly soft for her eldest son, since he had inherited her shyness to a marked degree, though with him it did not take the form of silent reserve. But as a boy in his teens, the Prince found his public duties often wearisome and even frightening, and it is largely owing to his mother's patience and sympathetic understanding of his difficulties—were they

not her own?—that he has been able to overcome his diffidence to such an extent that to-day he is the most popular Prince in Europe.

Once, long ago, the Prince could not quite conceal his boredom at a function where he was appearing with his mother. They were standing side by side upon the platform, acknowledging the cheers of the people, and posing for the inevitable press photographers. The Queen wore her most charming smile, but the young Prince looked weary, and ill at ease. His mother turned her head a little sideways; "David dear, please smile," she murmured. David smiled.

Even now she sometimes comes to his aid when it is necessary. Not long ago I was sitting near them both, at a gathering which quite unexpectedly the Prince had been asked to address. While the Chairman was making his speech, the Prince sat with his eyes on the ground, obviously thinking over his remarks. "What are you going to say, David?" asked the Queen, and within the next few minutes she had supplied him with the heads for a neat and appropriate little speech.

The Prince discusses with his mother the details of all the public work he undertakes, as well as the various tours which he makes. Before he visited the United States for the first time, in 1919, Queen Mary had made a considerable study of modern conditions in America, besides consulting different authorities on the subject, and she had formed her opinion as to the policy it would be best for the Prince to pursue. Before he sailed, she had a long talk with her son, and the Prince adopted nearly all her suggestions. The soundness of her judgment has a sufficient testimonial

in the instantaneous popularity that the Prince achieved the moment he made his appearance in the States.

Just as she is interested in his tours, as he undertakes them, so she is anxious to hear of his experiences when he returns, and the first engagement the Prince has to fulfil, upon his return to London, is to dine at Buckingham Palace and tell his mother all that has happened during his travels. Often he finds this something in the nature of an ordeal, for as he himself once remarked, "When I come home, my mother always makes me feel that I had one eye shut throughout the whole of the time I was travelling. She seems to know more of places of which she has read, than I do after I have actually visited them."

The Duke of York is still expected to come to his mother and tell her of his doings, especially in the industrial sphere. If he has visited any new welfare works, or even any kind of boys' club, Her Majesty insists on hearing all about it, the kind of work for which the new organisation is fitted, anything the boys said, or did, that was of interest, and any details that are likely to be of use to her in the future.

One might almost call her the "liaison officer" of the Royal family. The Prince of Wales has made the Empire, and the ex-service men, his speciality; the Duke of York has restricted himself largely to the industrial sphere. At present the Duke of Gloucester and Prince George are "odd job men," and undertake any duty beyond the scope of the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York. Sometimes there is overlapping. When this happens, and when the Duke of York, for instance, has to attend a function for which the Prince of Wales has the

specialised knowledge, he has to read up enough of the subject to be able to speak intelligently upon it; but he does not go to his brother for the information, he goes to his mother. In the same way, when recently Prince George made a speech at the dinner of the Royal Academy of Arts, he knew little about art himself, because his tastes do not lie that way. He went instead to the Queen, and she at once gave him the chief points of his speech, so that when he came to make it his hearers were surprised at the knowledge he displayed.

The Royal family is extraordinarily united. Even before his recent illness, the King and the Queen were very much together. After their sons were old enough to undertake official engagements, Their Majesties have usually contrived to spend their evenings together. Six days out of seven they dine together and, throughout the whole of their reign, they have maintained a large amount of that family life they enjoyed together at York Cottage.

If Queen Mary has, or permits herself to have, any partiality for any one of her four sons, it is in the direction of Prince George, doubtless on account of his extreme good looks. He favours his grandmother, Queen Alexandra, in this respect, and also takes after her to a certain extent in his character. Though of course much overshadowed by his elder brothers, he has considerable charm of manner, is entirely free from any ostentation, and is highly popular with his associates. Now that his health has caused his retirement from the Navy, a matter he has deeply regretted, Queen Mary hopes he will

succeed in the Government department he has joined. Indeed it is not too much to say that it would greatly delight her, if he did well in the Diplomatic Service.

The Duke of Gloucester, or Prince Henry as he was known for so long, is in many respects the odd man out of the Royal family. His temperament is decidedly on the serious side, a fact that commends him to his mother, but he lacks the charm and the adaptability of the Prince of Wales, and has not had anything like the amount of publicity that has fallen to the share of the Duke of York. The Queen whole-heartedly approves his keen interest in soldiering; he has passed some really stiff examinations since he first joined the Army, and his knowledge of tactics is well above the average. In Queen Mary's opinion, he would make an excellent Governor-General in the Dominions, and it is in this rôle she would like to see him serving his country. But for this he would certainly need a suitable wife, and though he is in his thirtieth year, there are no rumours of any attachment likely to meet with the Royal approval. Up to the present, in many ways the career of Their Majesties' third son is somewhat akin to that of the Duke of Connaught, and it is quite possible he will end with the command of the British Army. Though popular with his men, the Duke is not so whole-heartedly democratic as the Prince of Wales, yet he has little liking for "fuss" of any description, and often travels without even an equerry, though very, very seldom without one of the dogs to which he is devoted.

Queen Mary has been an excellent though at

times somewhat over-anxious mother, and it is only natural if just now her chief anxiety is centred on match-making. The youngest of her four sons is now twenty-seven, but only one is married. As all the world knows, Royal princes marry young, judging from recent Royal weddings. Twenty-one is considered a suitable age, and in the case of younger sons, at all events, there is no scarcity of perfectly eligible maidens.

It may be mentioned here that the Queen does not believe in too-early marriages; she thinks there is more chance of happiness when both parties have reached an age when they may be considered able to form a sound judgment, but no one realises more fully than does she, that all her sons have now reached that age, and the country at large would like to see its Princes support the honourable institution of matrimony.

At the present time, when either Prince Henry or Prince George are approached on this important subject, they announce that they are waiting for their eldest brother to give them a lead in matrimony, as he has so often done in the hunting field.

Queen Mary takes as much interest in her grandchildren as she does in her children. Little Princess Elizabeth is constantly with her Royal grandmother, while Master George and Master Gerald Lascelles are frequent visitors. She taught them the correct way to salute the flag, and even Lord Lascelles himself is not averse from consulting his mother-in-law as to certain points connected with their upbringing.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

QUEEN MARY AS WIFE AND HOUSEWIFE

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Consulted by the King on matters of importance—Care of His Majesty's health and well-being—Friends and pleasures shared by King and Queen—Nation's sympathy with Queen Mary during His Majesty's illness—The Queen's household management—Labour-saving devices at Buckingham Palace—Thought for and care of servants at the Palace—Interest in arts and crafts—Furnishing for the Prince of Wales.

DESPITE the very large amount of publicity now given to the Royal family, its members still, most fortunately for themselves, retain the right to a certain amount of privacy in their home lives, and it was only during the recent illness of the King that the nation had a real glimpse into the life of Queen Mary as a wife.

If the union of Princess May and Prince George was, at the time it took place, really a love match, as the Press of the period unhesitatingly proclaimed, is a matter known only to the parties themselves, but that it did indeed become a union of devoted affection, of mutual esteem and companionship, no one who has ever been admitted into the intimacy of the Royal circle can for a moment doubt.

Intelligent and capable as is Queen Mary, both in her public and private life, she has never attempted to meddle in spheres conventionally considered beyond her scope, far less to pose as the power behind the Throne, in any matters of international importance. Yet, as he himself has more than once admitted, King George makes a point of consulting her in all

matters of State, in which clear-sightedness, sound judgment, and practical common sense are likely to be of value. In matters touching other countries, he has found her knowledge of modern history and her grasp of the trend of modern thought, of the utmost assistance.

In less important matters, such as the history of the various Royal residences, and the treasures they contain, it is a family joke that he will almost invariably refer any questioner to the Queen. "She is sure to know," he will add cheerfully. And she does. In the Royal tours that Their Majesties have made together, the Queen has unobtrusively helped her husband in a hundred ways. Though he has a sound constitution, for some years previous to his recent illness his health was not robust; he caught cold easily for one thing, and this was a matter of some anxiety to the Queen, who took great care he did not sit in a draught, often herself closing a window or arranging matters so that the King did not have to face too sudden a change of temperature in any of his travels. In the matter of over-fatigue she was ever vigilant. The King, like most members of our Royal family, is a very willing worker, and often to the itinerary planned out for him, he would add another visit or another speech, until the Queen insisted on the programme being shown first to her.

Unlike many Royal couples, Their Majesties have never had separate circles of friends. King George has at no period of his life shown any disposition to make friends in any way unsuited for his home circle. While he is, perhaps, rather more easy to know than the Queen, their requirements in the

matter of their friends are very similar—sincerity, kindness, a high character, truthfulness: these are qualities that will be found in all those who enjoy the friendship of England's King and Queen.

According to custom, King George has occasionally been a guest at shooting parties, without the Queen—as has been mentioned, she does not shoot, and has really no interest in the sport—but apart from such visits as these, the King and Queen are seldom entertained apart; where one goes the other is willing to follow, what one enjoys will almost certainly please the other. Their private visits to theatres, too, are usually made together, though in this respect their tastes are not altogether similar; the King prefers the lighter type of play, a preference it is to be regretted the Prince of Wales so openly shares, while Her Majesty likes to give her support to entertainments requiring rather more intellectual effort, but regarding the many plays the King witnessed after his illness, it was the Queen who, knowing his tastes, made the choice each time. The King too, is more favourably inclined towards the cinema than is the Queen, though she takes a great interest in the films taken by the Duke of York, who, as we know, is a most enthusiastic wielder of the cine-camera, and possesses an interesting, and of course unique collection of moving pictures of the Royal family, including some most delightful records of the babyhood of his little daughter.

It was during the King's illness that the nation fully realised how deep was the bond between him and the Queen. In moments of deep anxiety, even Royal reserve tends to break down, and no one who

came into contact with the Queen during those trying weeks could have any doubt as to the burden she bore. Yet the King, who constantly craved her presence, never saw her otherwise than calm and cheerful, while as far as it was in any way possible, Her Majesty never broke an engagement or was late for an appointment. For the nursing staff, too, she was thoughtful and considerate: they must be sure of their proper rest, and there must be perfect silence in the vicinity of their rooms lest they be disturbed. But everything was done quietly and competently; there was no parade of grief, no theatrical appeals for sympathy, either public or private.

Like many people who are outwardly shy and reserved, Queen Mary greatly values any expression of esteem, and she, as well as King George, was profoundly moved and touched by the many messages of sympathy that reached them during that critical period. To the Queen came many letters from private individuals quite unknown to her, assuring her that they felt for her in her sorrow, and prayed daily for the recovery of the King. Many of these letters came from very humble people, and it was this class of epistle the Queen treasured most, for the writers had no axe to grind, they were moved by no considerations save a real desire to express sympathy. Some of them sent remedies they had found successful in treating their own invalids, and very quaint indeed some of them were; a few even enclosed charms, varying from saintly relics to mysterious bits of stone, but all were in the same strain—"we feel with you, we pray for you"—and from these humble tributes Queen Mary derived a very real satisfaction.

During the King's convalescence, Queen Mary was his constant companion; indeed during their stay at Craigweil House, King George himself remarked that they seemed to have been transported back to the early days at York Cottage, when the cares of a family and the cares of State were alike unknown to them, and they found their interest, as well as their happiness, in each other's society.

Religion is another matter Their Majesties have in common. Both possess the direct and simple faith in which they were grounded in their youth, which to each has been a strength and a consolation, during many of the trials common to humanity. "This is a good, quiet, Christian home," a lady-in-waiting once told a prelate who was to preach at Sandringham, and she went on to say that each day King George spent a certain amount of time with his Bible, while during his convalescence, when he was well enough to enjoy a little gramophone music, each night he asked for a record of his favourite hymn, "Abide with me," to be played before he retired for the night.

A very great deal has been written concerning Queen Mary's capability as a housekeeper. That she was brought up to understand the management of a house, and that she has the domestic knowledge necessary for that task is certainly true, but that she herself ever takes any part in the actual running of her house is nonsense. She has not the leisure for such work, even if she had the inclination. Her time is too fully occupied, fulfilling the various duties required of her in her public capacity, to allow her leisure for domestic work.

But this by no means implies that she has no knowledge of how the staff of servants works, of its competence or otherwise, and of the housekeeping in general, and Queen Mary actually does occasionally visit the large kitchens in Buckingham Palace, which are decorated in black and white, according to her own preference; the walls are tiled in white, and the fittings are of white wood, which is scrubbed at least twice every day.

Queen Mary also makes periodical visits to the store and linen cupboards. As may be imagined this was something of an innovation, and her first visit was not exactly welcomed. This troubled Her Majesty not at all. She thought it her duty to look into these matters now and again, and she did it. She does not interfere, that is not her object; she hopes and expects to find everything as it should be, and it is only when there is some flagrant waste or glaring mismanagement, that the official responsible receives rebuke.

Queen Mary is very keenly interested in all labour-saving devices, and during her shopping tours always asks to be shown anything new in that way. Not long ago she was to be seen carefully considering the rival merits of a washing-machine, and at the same counter she purchased an electric potato parer and a new chopping knife. While staying at Craigweil House with the King, her attention was drawn to a new stainless steel bedstead, and she liked the idea so much that she has since bought a similar one for use in Buckingham Palace. The labour-saving devices in the domestic regions of the Palace are so complete that it is a fact that no

HUSBAND AND WIFE

A delightful study of King George and Queen Mary. A photograph taken on the terrace at Buckingham Palace.

servant need go down on her knees to carry out her tasks.

While the engaging of the domestic staff is naturally left to the housekeeper, Queen Mary makes it a rule not only to know every servant by sight, down to the humblest kitchen maid, but to know their names and something of their lives, and if any trouble befalls them, it never fails to reach the Royal ears. Should a maid fall ill, she receives not only proper medical treatment, with whatever luxuries the doctor may order, but there will be a holiday arranged at one of the convalescent homes known to the Queen, a return ticket purchased for her, and sometimes a relative sent with her.

Should a manservant be advised to try an outdoor life, a position is always found for him at Sandringham, or Windsor, and from time to time enquiries are made as to his progress. Many of the menservants are married, and should there be a happy event in the family, there are always personal enquiries as to the welfare of mother and child, with a gift, often of Queen Mary's own working, for the latter.

In all new colour schemes introduced into the Royal residences, and indeed in every detail of decoration, Queen Mary takes a very active interest, and when the Royal suites are to be refurnished or redecorated, all plans are first submitted for her approval. In her surroundings, as in her personal attire, the Queen prefers soft blues, misty purples, and the many shades and blendings of these two colours, but like every other woman, she appreciates an occasional change and will sometimes depart from her usual custom.

When recently new curtains were needed for the whole of Buckingham Palace—there are over three hundred windows—specimens were first submitted to the Queen, before an order was placed. Since the King's illness, Queen Mary has been greatly interested in the curative effect of certain colours, a branch of healing which is increasingly engaging the attention of the medical world, and she personally consulted the Royal Doctors before deciding on a colour scheme for His Majesty's room.

As far as it is in any way found possible, Queen Mary gives orders for all her domestic requirements to firms who employ ex-service men, whilst she is also, as may be expected of one so interested in the arts and crafts of the past, always anxious to encourage the various guilds which endeavour to maintain ancient traditions. An example of this may be found by anyone who cares to inspect the fine specimen of the locksmith's art that they will find on the gates of Buckingham Palace. This is a creation of the Bromsgrove Guild, and is of a particularly charming design.

When the Prince of Wales took up his quarters permanently at Marlborough House, it was Queen Mary whom he asked to superintend the decorations for him, and it was a task in which the Queen, both as mother and woman, delighted. She spent long hours over the selection, and remembering her eldest son's hearty dislike of anything approaching ostentation, chose effects of harmonious simplicity. The dining-room is of crimson and gold, plain but highly effective; for the Prince's private sitting-room his mother chose one of her own favourite shades

of blue, while his bedroom is cream throughout. The latter is plain to severity, indeed the bed itself is so far removed from the popular idea of Royal magnificence, that Prince George once laughingly asked his eldest brother if he had bought it at a hospital disposal sale!

Just as Queen Mary favours the softest shades of blue—a taste that would seem to be inherited by her only daughter—so the Duchess of York inclines to palest pink, and when recently she had her bedroom redecorated in her favourite shade, Queen Mary helped her to choose many of the furnishings. When the whole scheme was decided upon, she herself made the bedspread, an artistic design, formed of panels of old lace, stitched together and mounted on satin of the exact shade to tone with the room.

Though Queen Mary has never liked bright colours for herself—even in her youth she inclined to quiet shades—she knows the value of them in the nursery, and the little garments she makes for distribution are nearly always of pretty blues and pinks, specially designed to delight the baby wearers.

In her rôle of housewife, as in that of Queen, our Sovereign Lady has always had a very perfect idea of the fitness of things, and whenever she does any domestic shopping, which is quite often, her first consideration is the suitability of the purchase to the purpose for which it is bought. Her ideas are invariably clear-cut and eminently sensible, a trait which has often surprised working-class housewives whom she has visited. She knows the average working man's dietary; indeed, when she visits, as she frequently does, a cookery exhibition, it is the artisan's

menu that chiefly interests her, and on more than one occasion she has " passed on " recipes to the dwellers in humble homes. Again and again Queen Mary has expressed her admiration of the good management of the artisan's wife. " Those wives and mothers—they make me feel humble," she once exclaimed, after visiting a block of tenements in a very poor neighbourhood ; " they manage so well on so little. I am sure we do not extend enough credit to the working women of England."

CHAPTER NINETEEN

QUEEN MARY AS HOSTESS

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QUEEN MARY AS HOSTESS

Thought for guests' comfort—Queen's preference for Windsor as place for Royal entertaining—Rooms and treasures at Windsor—Queen Mary as guest—Family parties at Christmas and preparation of gifts—Christmas Day with the Royal family.

WHILE Queen Mary is too keen a student of history to be lacking in reverence for ritual, and is possessed of too strong a sense of what is fitting to undervalue the importance of the Royal pageants in which she is always one of the most impressive figures, she has never had any particular interest in State banquets, or indeed State entertaining of any kind, though needless to remark she plays her part in such ceremonies to the full. But it is as a private hostess that she really excels.

There is no " gush," not the shadow of effusiveness even to a life-long friend, but a quiet and determined effort to study the guest's comfort in every way. She herself inspects the room allotted to the guest after the servants have prepared it, to make quite sure that the flowers are those favoured by her friend, that there are books likely to be to her taste, and that nothing has been omitted that could in any way add to the comfort of her visit.

Queen Mary dislikes unpunctuality, and even in her friends it is not overlooked. Thus should there be special plans for a drive, or a visit to any place of interest, there will be dropped a gentle hint as to the hour of starting, that the guest may be ready in good time, but the excursion is always planned

with a view to the special entertainment of the visitor, and is often in the nature of a pleasant surprise.

Tea is usually taken in Her Majesty's own sitting-room, but I may mention that the "chatter," if so light a word may be applied to so dignified a person as Queen Mary, is never of that gossipy nature common to all classes of tea tables. The Queen is by nature a silent woman, and all her life she has suffered from a lack of small talk, a lack she does not altogether regret, for when she talks she likes to talk about something of definite interest, and as a listener she has the same taste. Even intimate friends are rarely invited for more than a week-end, since the public engagements of the Queen make a longer visit impossible. According to Royal custom, if the guest is going in the morning, adieux are said overnight, and neither the King nor the Queen appear in the morning, but this is a custom the Queen often breaks, particularly if she feels she will be giving pleasure by doing so, and frequently she is waiting to speed the parting guest when the car is at the door.

While State banquets are frequently given at Buckingham Palace, Queen Mary greatly favours Windsor Castle as a place for Royal entertainment. When the Royal family are alone, or their guests are very intimate friends, they use the Oak Room, a plainly furnished salon overlooking the Quadrangle, where, as may be gathered, all the furnishings are of oak, including the large round table. This was an apartment of which Queen Victoria was particularly fond, and there still hangs on its walls her favourite portrait of herself painted by Angeli.

Should the dinner party be large, it is given in a

room overlooking the East Terrace. This room contains the famous silver-gilt wine cooler of George IV, one of the finest specimens of its kind in existence.

A State banquet such as is given in honour of the visit of a foreign monarch, takes place in St. George's Hall, a truly noble banqueting room. This room is two hundred feet long, down one side are thirteen windows, and opposite these, so that the light shall fall directly on them, are full-length portraits of the last twelve Sovereigns of England, while the ceiling is decorated with the insignia of the Knights of the Garter. The chair the King occupies is of oak, and is very similar to that used for the coronation; the chair of Queen Mary is of a similar but less ornate design. The gold dinner service used is the finest in Europe; it will dine one hundred and eighty people, and that is allowing six plates for each guest, while the great gold centre-pieces are veritable works of art, quite apart from their intrinsic value. Even in a Royal ménage there are occasional black sheep, and some time ago it was discovered that a Royal footman was trying to make easy money by scraping a certain amount of gold from the bottom of each plate, and selling the precious filings.

The floral decorations of the table all come from the Royal glass houses, and it is only on such occasions that the orchids are cut. It is foolish to assert, as I have seen asserted, that Queen Mary herself arranges the flowers on her dinner tables; a very superficial knowledge of Royal banquets would show the sheer impossibility of her having the time, even if she possessed the trained skill to do this, but it is a fact that she does express her wishes as to the nature of

the floral decorations. Unless it is for a State banquet, when naturally the gold centre pieces have to be used, Queen Mary dislikes those vases which prevent her from seeing her *vis-à-vis*. Unlike Queen Alexandra, who favoured pink and scarlet geraniums, she prefers a mingling of rose and crimson with pale mauve, but in this, as in all personal matters, she inclines to simplicity rather than to ostentation.

After a glimpse of the Queen as Hostess, it will not, perhaps, be out of place to show her as guest. Sometimes, when King George is with a shooting party, Queen Mary avails herself of the opportunity to pay a few private visits, and though these are usually of an informal character, there are certain rules of etiquette that are never relaxed, even when her host and hostess are old and valued friends.

If Queen Mary drives down to the house wherein she is to be a guest, as she nearly always does if it be near London, her host and hostess will be at the front door to receive her; but should she travel by train, they will be waiting on the station platform to welcome their Royal visitor, and conduct her in person to the house.

According to ancient tradition, any residence sheltering the Sovereign of the realm becomes a Royal residence for the duration of the stay, and the Royal visitor the host. Neither King George nor Queen Mary are over fond of ceremony, and they have long ago waived that formality, but for the use of "the first lady in the land" there has to be provided a suite of rooms, consisting of a bedroom, with bathroom attached, and a private sitting-room. A bedroom must be in close proximity for the lady-

in-waiting, and accommodation provided for the Queen's personal dresser, and the footman—who is a survival of the days when, owing to plots hatched against the life of the Sovereign, the monarch never travelled without a personal attendant, who tasted every dish before his master partook of it. The footman still stands behind Queen Mary's chair, and sits beside the chauffeur when out driving, but his "tasting" duty has long since fallen into disuse.

Unlike humbler mortals, Queen Mary can never take a holiday which is wholly free from the duties attendant on her position. Even when she is visiting friends, her postbag is sent down to her each morning, and before she can look forward to the day's relaxation, she must spend at least two hours going through her mail, and dictating the answers to its principal contents. Knowing her tastes, her hosts usually arrange a drive to a place of interest in the neighbourhood, an historic building, an historic ruin, or perhaps to a neighbouring town, where Queen Mary may indulge her passion for collecting antiques by seeking for a find in likely shops. If it be summer weather, the party may enjoy an alfresco lunch, for Queen Mary greatly enjoys picnicking, when conditions are favourable.

Her Majesty retires to her private sitting-room for an hour before dinner, and during this time there may quite likely be some more letters for her to go through, or the programme of some public visit to study. When dinner is about to be announced, the host goes up to the Queen's door, and there waits until she appears and he can personally escort her down. Dinner over, there is usually a short

programme of music—often a distinguished artist is asked to play or sing for the party—but if not, then Her Majesty makes it a point to have a brief conversation with each guest present, and it is rarely indeed that she is not able to turn the conversation to a topic of interest, not to herself, but to the person to whom she talks.

Queen Mary retires at what she thinks is the usual hour of the household, and when she rises to leave the room, all who are present rise too, the men bowing low, and the ladies curtseying as Her Majesty retires. It is, of course, unwritten law that no guest may under any circumstances, save those of illness, retire before the Royal visitor.

Of all the entertaining Queen Mary is called upon to do, both public and private, in the course of a year, there is none she enjoys so much as Christmas at Sandringham, when all the Royal family gather together to celebrate the festive season, with real old-fashioned fervour. True to her methods, Queen Mary makes her Christmas preparations well in advance. By the end of October she has her gift list made out, and Queen Mary never gives an unsuitable gift; also she never gives the same gift twice. To avoid this irritating error she makes out her own present list, in her small neat hand-writing and, once the presents are bought, files the list away for reference in the succeeding year. For many years now Queen Mary has obeyed the behest to "shop early," and by the end of November every gift is packed ready for dispatch.

The Queen packs all parcels to go to intimate friends herself; altogether she sends from six to

eight hundred presents each year, and for the packing she uses the specially attractive and seasonal paper, string, and labels that one may now buy for such a purpose. Since Princess Mary's marriage, she has much missed her help, for this was one of the tasks in which the Princess delighted, and in the big blue morning-room of Buckingham Palace, where the walnut chiffonier makes so excellent a bench, mother and daughter spent many busy, happy hours, getting ready their Christmas gifts.

When intent on her Christmas shopping, there is one question the Queen never omits to ask: "Is this Empire made?" she will enquire, and save in the case of antiques, if the answer is in the negative, there is no purchase made. Queen Mary sends many gifts to friends overseas, and so anxious is she that these shall reach the recipients on the great day itself, that they are often sent first to a local Government department, with instructions that they shall be sent on that date.

Besides her private gifts each Christmas, the Queen sends presents of money, toys, clothing, food, and books to countless institutions in which she is interested, and she is careful always to discover exactly which kind of gift will be most useful.

It says much for Queen Mary's regard for Christmas Day, that it is her invariable rule to don a new dinner dress for the first time that evening, but the festivities of the gathering at Sandringham begin when the King and Queen greet their guests in the central hall, which is the real "living-room" of the Royal family, when in their Norfolk home. Here on Christmas Eve are gathered all members of the

British Royal family who are within travelling distance of Sandringham. The last two years have seen all three of Their Majesties' grandchildren present, and they have done much to add merriment to the occasion. In 1928 little Princess Elizabeth travelled down in a railway carriage, which the railway employees had decorated with evergreens and a giant Christmas cracker, which greatly delighted the young lady.

Every member of the party is expected to be down for breakfast on Christmas morning, but the gifts are not exchanged until after divine service, which the whole party always attends in the little church of St. Mary's. The service is very simple. Their Majesties themselves choose the hymns that are sung, and join heartily in their singing, and the sole difference between this service and that in every other church on that morning is that the congregation rises, and remains standing during the few moments occupied by the Royal party in entering and leaving the church.

After a simple lunch, certain members of the Royal family go round the estate, making gifts to the employees and pensioners. No one is forgotten, and the gifts are certain to be of practical use. After lunch, Queen Mary always rests for an hour, but is always down in time to give the presents from the great Christmas tree, a custom originated by Prince Albert, and one which has never once been allowed to lapse. Needless to say, this tree has been an immense delight to Master George and Master Gerald Lascelles, and their little cousin Elizabeth: on one occasion Master George was so fascinated by its

splendours, that he forgot to come forward for his presents.

Later comes the great event of the day—the Christmas dinner. This is a real old-fashioned affair, with turkey, roast beef, plum puddings and mince pies, and the traditional boar's head and sucking pig as side dishes. The plum pudding is always brought in blazing merrily. Indeed, on one occasion so merrily did it flame, that the Prince of Wales suggested calling in the private fire-brigade to deal with the conflagration!

With dessert there is the ancient snap-dragon, and a goodly supply of crackers, which are duly pulled, and the head-gear donned by all members of the party, irrespective of age or dignity. Indeed, this is the one occasion in which Royal dignity is conspicuous chiefly by its absence, and no one seeing Queen Mary entering into the games of the evening, pulling crackers with her grandchildren, being kissed by her sons beneath the huge bunch of mistletoe that never fails to find its place among the decorations, would recognise in her the stately and rather awesome lady who attends public functions or holds Drawing Rooms.

Of late years it has become the fashion to murmur wearily against the boredom of Christmas, to denounce it as a piece of old-fashioned sentiment of which we should well be rid, but while Queen Mary has any share in keeping up a national custom or any influence upon the habits of her subjects, Christmas will still retain its hold upon the hearts of the people.

CHAPTER TWENTY

QUEEN MARY'S WORK FOR WOMEN

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QUEEN MARY'S WORK FOR WOMEN

Deep interest in all branches of women's welfare—Ready grasp and application of detail—Discrimination in bestowal of patronage—A Royal visit and its result—Value of the Queen's example—Increasing popularity of Queen Mary as result of her hard work, kindness, and understanding.

IN this brief biography of Queen Mary I have striven, as far as possible, to avoid stressing those aspects of her character usually emphasised by those who write on this subject, or to depict our Sovereign Lady as a paragon of all the virtues, " Icily regular, splendidly null," and entirely lacking in any of the faults common to all humanity. Queen Mary herself would be the first to scorn such a picture. She is a shy woman, and like all shy people apt to be misunderstood ; she is an intelligent woman, and, above all a woman with a high sense of duty, which she has manifested again and again in the fine services she has rendered to her country.

There is scarcely a single branch of women's activities, whether it be mothercraft, housecraft, sickness, charity, or industrial life, where she has not made her influence felt, and left the status of women higher for that influence.

I have already given a brief and very incomplete account of the Queen's war-work : with the coming of peace she did not slacken her efforts in the more permanent cause of women in normal life. In England the Queen is not supposed to have any interest in a political measure, and the Queen did not publicly express any opinion on the question of

the extension of the franchise to all members of her sex, but all those who during that period were brought into contact with Her Majesty, were well aware that she was delighted when at length the measure was passed. She has no wish to see women usurp the place of men—indeed she could hardly be called an enthusiastic feminist in any way, for she still clings to the idea that women find their highest fulfilment in wifehood and motherhood—but she has great faith, founded on long experience, in the common-sense of women when applied to the practical problems of daily life. She firmly believes that women should have a voice in all matters pertaining to the welfare of women and children, and though she does not consider political life offers an ideal career for women, yet she rejoices to see suitable—that is practical and intelligent—women returned to Parliament, where they will be able to express the opinions of their sex regarding measures dealing with the social life of the times.

Her interest in the problems affecting the working woman is wholly genuine. No one who has watched her on some of her visits to humble neighbourhoods, and listened to her talking to the East End mothers, could doubt it. The Queen disappears, and it is one woman talking to another. She knows almost as much of their problems as does the most enthusiastic worker in the various settlements she visits. The price of food, that dread spectre of unemployment, the ailments of childhood, and the housing question, as the overworked mother of a large family sees it—these are the subjects Queen Mary discusses with her humbler friends. So naturally do they

accept each other, the Queen of England and the wives of navvies, dock labourers, and fish porters, that often after the visit the women with whom the Queen has chatted, will write to her, telling her the result of taking some advice she gave, or the issue of a special problem that was worrying them at the time.

Queen Mary is also a frequent visitor to many of the hostels for business girls, which are increasing so satisfactorily. Here, of course, there is an entirely different atmosphere. There is no poverty—in its usually accepted sense—and no particular hardship, but there are many opportunities for the Royal visitor to assert her interest in practical details. She inspects the rest rooms and the kitchens; she may even suggest an improvement in the domestic offices; indeed in certain quarters there is some slight apprehension when it is known that the Queen is due, for it is never certain just how thorough will be her inspection, or what defect she will lay bare. Unlike many distinguished personages on these occasions, she does not merely smile sweetly, remark "How very charming it all is," and depart without having really seen it at all.

One of the Queen's most outstanding qualities is her determination, and she has been very successful in showing other people what she wants, as many a social organiser has not altogether joyfully discovered. The Queen must be the patron of well over a hundred philanthropic organisations of one kind or another, and her presence at their various functions is naturally highly prized.

Now and again it so happens that certain charities

are in the first instance organised, not for the needy, but for the organisers, while sometimes members of the smart set will lend their names to schemes solely from a desire to figure in the limelight. When Queen Mary first came to the Throne, she was considered fair game for these social climbers, and knowing her interest in philanthropy, there was keen competition to induce Her Majesty to pay visits of inspection to various "good works."

Alas for their blighted hopes! Queen Mary did not, according to their easy code, play fair. Indeed she was most annoyingly intelligent, and she actually noticed things! It was really most disappointing. Instead of gazing vaguely round, smiling blandly, and patting the heads of one or two urchins specially scrubbed for the occasion, in place of saying "How delightful! How praiseworthy! What fine work you are doing, my dear Lady Blank," she saw all there was to see, together with a lot that was not on show, and said what she thought about it. So tactless and so unexpected!

One example is typical of many. It was at a social organisation in the East End of London, with several titled patrons, and several more who hoped for titles as a result of their patronage. The committee got ahead of their less ostentatious rivals, by obtaining the Queen's promise to come and inspect the result of their labours. Her Majesty duly arrived, and was escorted over the building. Model flats for the poverty-stricken tenants, rooms for the secretarial staff, rest rooms for the lady organisers, and yet more rest rooms expensively furnished for the lady organisers. In these last the Queen paused, looked hard round the

room and then, walking to the window, stared out at a most unlovely vista of slum dwellings.

"Do these belong to the charity?" she enquired.

"Yes, Your Majesty," came the reply, "but at present we have not sufficient funds to alter them."

"I should like to go over them," announced the Queen.

This bombshell was received with great protestations. It was impossible for the Queen to visit such hovels, it was not fitting, it was beneath her dignity!

"It will never be beneath my dignity to visit the homes in which my subjects have to live," said Queen Mary. There being no escape, she was conducted over the slum tenement, which proved to be one of the worst in London, with whole families huddling in tiny rooms and sanitary arrangements such as are impossible to describe. Queen Mary finished her inspection in silence, but when she returned to the rest rooms she broke that silence.

"These houses," she said, her voice cold with scorn, "are a disgrace to the country and an outrage upon those poor souls who have to live in them. You tell me you have no money to spend on improvements, yet your rest rooms have cost more than the sum needed for those tenements. I shall pay another visit here soon. If nothing has been done in the matter I shall withdraw my name from your list of patrons."

The houses were rebuilt within two months.

Each month the Queen has to fulfil many duties that do not interest her, and probably some that she

actually dislikes, yet her visits to working-class homes are not in either category and often it is she herself who suggests such visits. Always she adds: "Please do not make any preparations. If the people will allow me to call upon them as they are it is all I ask," and by this time those who conduct her on her East End tours have abandoned the old practice of selecting a well-conducted family in the neighbourhood and, apprising them of the honour about to be done them, set the womenfolk house-cleaning in readiness for the Royal visit.

Queen Mary wants to see things as they are, and not as they may appear to be. This applies to many other things besides tenement inspections. When she visits a maternity home she likes to hear of the cases that have been treated, of any progress made in the method of treatment, and mothers who expect just a smile and a pat on the head for their new-born infant are surprised at the questions Her Majesty asks and the real knowledge they betray.

Cynics, though not perhaps very intelligent cynics, sometimes enquire what actual *good* these visits of the Queen do; she cannot rebuild slums, add wings to hospitals or, with the best will in the world, subscribe large sums to all the schemes in which she takes an interest. Those who ask such questions forget the all-powerful force of example. Her Majesty, as well as being Queen of England, is still the head of society; she can still set a fashion in good works, she can still give a lead for the activities of energetic ladies who aspire to spend their money in ways approved of by the first lady of the land; she can, and does, enlist the practical sympathy of those who, but for a Royal

finger pointing the way, might never see where their help was urgently needed.

Even on public bodies which are notoriously slow to move the Queen's influence has a quickening effect. When some time ago Her Majesty visited a particularly bad slum in Shoreditch, her expression of opinion on the matter was so forceful that the London County Council voted the respectable sum of forty thousand pounds towards rebuilding the hovels, and there have been several similar instances.

There are those who tell us that our social life of to-day is not very sound, that its modern tendencies leave much to be desired. Let those who have called Queen Mary old-fashioned and "respectable," who have sneered at her "middle-class" virtues, ask themselves what society might have been had the first lady in the land set it a less excellent example? Certain democratic sections are ever ready with a jibe at Royalty, but the most rabid among them have to admit that our Sovereign Lady has all her life striven to raise the tone of the society over which she presides.

So many public ceremonies fall to the lot of our Queen that it comes as something of a surprise to recall that she has unveiled only one war memorial. That was during the King's illness, when she unveiled the memorial to the Mercantile Marine on Tower Hill. It was a cold, wet day, yet neither the inclemency of the weather nor the importance of the occasion prevented the Queen from exercising her customary powers of observation. In the crowd assembled to witness the ceremony a little lad was seized with faintness; almost before those beside him had

noticed his distress the Queen had motioned to Sir Laming Worthington Evans, who hastened from the platform to summon the ambulance assistants.

It is such little incidents as these that bring out the humanity of the Queen, a humanity apt to be hidden behind her reserve. It was an important ceremony and she was naturally the chief figure in it, but that did not prevent her from noticing a child's trouble.

Queen Mary may not possess the appeal of the Prince of Wales or even of the Duchess of York, but if her popularity is not so apparent you have only to seek in the right places, the worth-while places, to find that not only does it exist but that during the last ten years it has increased amazingly. You must look first among women who are in any way working for the real welfare of their sex. Ask them about the Queen, about her interest in their efforts, her practical sympathy for their cause, and what they tell you will reveal something of the real Queen Mary. You must look, too, among her friends. They are not many, but the esteem and affection in which they hold their Queen is worth more than the gushing panegyrics of a hundred acquaintances.

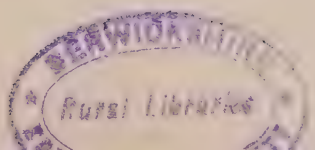
Lastly you must look among her family, to whom Queen Mary has been more than mother, and who have found in her a " guide, philosopher and friend " of inestimable worth.

Speeches, Royal or otherwise, are not always a guide to the character of the speaker, but part of a speech made by Queen Mary in 1923 epitomises the spirit in which she has endeavoured to fulfil her high position.

"Remember that life is made up of loyalty: loyalty to your friends; loyalty to things beautiful and good; loyalty to the country in which you live; loyalty to your King; and above all, for this holds all other loyalties together, loyalty to God."

Despite the outward pomp and splendour, despite the deference with which she is surrounded, the lip service which is always accorded her, the life of a queen, particularly a queen of to-day, is by no means an easy one. She is exposed to ceaseless criticism, not all of it silent, no effort is too great to be expected of her, no fatigue too deep for her to endure with unruffled countenance, and in all circumstances and under the most trying conditions she must be amiable, serene, and regal. Not an easy part to play—that of a twentieth-century queen—yet who shall say that Queen Mary has failed in her interpretation, or that she has not merited the increasing affection in which she is held by her people?

Fifty years ago the little Princess May learned her Catechism very thoroughly; she learned some of it with her heart as well as with her lips, and indeed it may be said of her that she has done her duty in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call her. Well for all her subjects if they can claim as much.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